





T H E
O D Y S S E Y
O F
H O M E R.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GREEK,

B Y

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E D I N B U R G H:

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HOMER'S ODYSSEY.
THE
ODYSSEY.
BOOK I.

THE ARGUMENT.

Minerva's descent to Ithaca.

The poem opens within forty eight days of the arrival of Ulysses in his dominions. He had now remained seven years in the island of Calypso, when the gods assembled in council, proposed the method of his departure from thence, and his return to his native country. For this purpose it is concluded to send Mercury to Calypso, and Pallas immediately descends to Ithaca. She holds a conference with Telemachus, in the shape of Mentis king of the Taphians; in which she advises him to take a journey in quest of his father Ulysses, to Pylos and Sparta, where Nestor and Menelaus yet reigned: then, after having visibly displayed her divinity, disappears. The suitors of Penelope make great entertainments, and riot in her palace till night. Phemius sings to them the return of the Grecians, till Penelope puts a stop to the song. Some words arise between the suitors and Telemachus, who summons the council to meet the day following.

THE man, for wisdom's various arts renown'd,
Long exercis'd in woes, oh Muse ! resound ;
Who, when his arms had wrought the destin'd fall
Of sacred Troy, and raz'd her heav'n-built wall,
Wand'ring from clime to clime, observant stray'd, 51
Their manners noted, and their states survey'd.

On stormy seas unnumber'd toils he bore,
 Safe with his friends to gain his natal shore :
 Vain toils ! their impious folly dar'd to prey
 On herds devoted to the God of day : 10
 The God, vindictive, doom'd them never more
 (Ah men unblest'd !) to touch that natal shore.
 Oh snatch some portion of these acts from fate,
 Celestial Muse ! and to our world relate.

Now at their native realms the Greeks arriv'd ; 15
 All who the wars of ten long years surviv'd,
 And 'scap'd the perils of the gulfy main.
 Ulysses, sole of all the victor train,
 An exile from his dear paternal coast,
 Deplor'd his absent queen, and empire lost. 20
 Calypso in her caves constrain'd his stay,
 With sweet, reluctant, amorous delay :
 In vain — for now the circling years disclose
 The day predestin'd to reward his woes.
 At length his Ithaca is giv'n by fate, 25
 Where yet new labours his arrival wait :
 At length their rage the hostile pow'rs restrain,
 All but the ruthless monarch of the main.
 But now the God, remote, a heav'nly guest,
 In Æthiopia grac'd the genial feast, 30
 (A race divided, whom with sloping rays
 The rising and descending sun surveys) ;
 There on the world's extremest verge, rever'd
 With hecatombs and pray'r in pomp preferr'd,
 Distant he lay : while, in the bright abodes 35
 Of high Olympus, Jove conven'd the Gods :
 Th' assembly thus, the sire supreme address'd,
 Ægyllus' fate revolving in his breast,
 Whom young Orestes to the dreary coast
 Of Pluto sent, a blood polluted ghost. 40

Perverse mankind ! whose wills, created free,
 Charge all their woes on absolute decree ;
 All to the dooming Gods their guilt translate,
 And follies are miscall'd the crimes of fate.
 When to his lust Ægyllus gave the rein, 45
 Did fate, or we, th' adulterous act constrain ?

Did:

Did fate, or we, when great Atrides dy'd,
 Urge the bold traitor to the regicide?
 Hermes I sent, while yet his soul remain'd
 Sincere from royal blood, and faith profan'd;
 To warn the wretch, that young Orestes, grown
 To manly years, should reassert the throne:
 Yet, impotent of mind, and uncontroll'd,
 He plung'd into the gulf which heav'n foretold.

50

Here paus'd the God; and pensive thus replies
 Minerva, graceful with her azure eyes.

55

O thou! from whom the whole creation springs,
 The source of pow'r on earth deriv'd to kings!

His death was equal to the direful deed;
 So may the man of blood be doom'd to bleed!

60

But grief and rage alternate wound my breast
 For brave Ulysses, still by fate oppress'd.

Amidst an isle, around whose rocky shore
 The forests murmur, and the surges roar,

The blameless hero from his wish'd-for home
 A goddess guards in her enchanted dome.

65

(Atlas her sire, to whose far-piercing eye
 The wonders of the deep expanded lie;

Th' eternal columns which on earth he rears
 End in the starry vault, and prop the spheres.)

70

By his fair daughter is the chief confin'd,
 Who soothes to dear delight his anxious mind:

Successless all her soft caresses prove,
 To banish from his breast his country's love;

To see the smoke from his lov'd palace rise,
 While the dear isle in distant prospect lies,

75

With what contentment could he close his eyes?
 And will omnipotence neglect to save

The suff'ring virtue of the wise and brave?

Must he, whose altars on the Phrygian shore

80

With frequent rites, and pure, avow'd thy pow'r,
 Be doom'd the worst of human ills to prove,

Unblest'd, abandon'd to the wrath of Jove?

Daughter! what words have pass'd thy lips unweigh'd?
 (Reply'd the Thund'rer to the martial maid).

85

Deem not unjustly by my doom oppress'd
 Of human race the wisest and the best.

Neptune, by pray'r repentant rarely won,
 Afflicts the chief, t' avenge his giant-son,
 Whose visual orb Ulysses robb'd of light ; 90
 Great Polypheme, of more than mortal might !
 Him young Thoösa bore, (the bright increase
 Of Phorcys, dreaded in the founts and seas) ;
 Whom Neptune ey'd with bloom of beauty blest'd,
 And in his cave the yielding nymph compress'd. 95
 For this, the God constrains the Greek to roam,
 A hopeless exile from his native home,
 From death alone exempt—but cease to mourn ;
 Let all combine t' achieve his wish'd return :
 Neptune aton'd, his wrath shall now refrain, 100
 Or thwart the synod of the Gods in vain.

Father and King ador'd ! Minerva cry'd,
 Since all who in th' Olympian bow'r reside
 Now make the wand'ring Greek their public care,
 Let Hermes to th' * Atlantic isle repair ; 105
 Bid him, arriv'd in bright Calypso's court,
 The sanction of th' assembled pow'rs report :
 That wise Ulysses to his native land
 Must speed, obedient to their high command.
 Meantime Telemachus, the blooming heir 110
 Of sea-girt Ithaca, demands my care :
 'Tis mine, to form his green, unpractis'd years,
 In sage debates ; surrounded with his peers,
 To save the state ; and timely to restrain
 The bold intrusion of the suitor-train ; 115
 Who croud his palace, and with lawless pow'r
 His herds and flocks in feastful rites devour.
 To distant Sparta, and the spacious waste
 Of sandy Pyle, the royal youth shall haste.
 There, warm with filial love, the cause inquire 120
 That from his realm retards his god-like fire ;
 Deliv'ring early to the voice of fame
 The promise of a great, immortal name.

She said : the sandals of celestial mold
 Fledg'd with ambrosial plumes, and with rich gold, 125

* Ogygia.

Surround

Book I. HOMER'S ODYSSEY.

7

Surround her feet ; with these sublime she sails.
 Th' aerial space, and mounts the winged gales :
 O'er earth and ocean wide prepar'd to soar,
 Her dreaded arm a beamy jav'lin bore,
 Pond'rous and vast ; which, when her fury burns, 130
 Proud tyrants humbles, and whole hosts o'erturns.
 From high Olympus prone her flight she bends,
 And in the realm of Ithaca descends.
 Her lineaments divine, the grave disguise
 Of Mentès' form conceal'd from human eyes ; 135
 (Mentès, the monarch of the Taphian land) ;
 A glitt'ring spear wav'd awful in her hand.
 There in the portal plac'd, the heav'n born maid
 Enormous riot and misrule survey'd.
 On hides of beeves, before the palace-gate, 140
 (Sad spoils of luxury), the suitors sat.
 With rival art, and ardour in their mien,
 At chess they vie, to captivate the queen ;
 Divining of their loves. Attending nigh,
 A menial train the flowing bowl supply : 145
 Others, apart, the spacious hall prepare,
 And form the costly feast with busy care.
 There young Telemachus, his bloomy face
 Glowing celestial sweet, with god-like grace
 Amid the circle shines : but hope and fear 150
 (Painful vicissitude !) his bosom tear.
 Now imag'd in his mind, he sees restor'd,
 In peace and joy, the people's rightful lord ;
 The proud oppressors fly the vengeful sword.
 While his fond soul these fancied triumphs swell'd, 155
 The stranger-guest the royal youth beheld :
 Griev'd that a visitant so long should wait
 Unmark'd, unhonour'd, at a monarch's gate ;
 Instant, he flew with hospitable haste,
 And the new friend with courteous air embrac'd. 160
 Stranger ! whoe'er thou art, securely rest,
 Affianc'd in my faith, a friendly guest :
 Approach the dome, the social banquet share,
 And then the purpose of thy soul declare.
 Thus affable and mild, the prince precedes, 165
 And to the dome th' unknown celestial leads.

The

The spear receiving from her hand, he plac'd
Against a column, fair with sculpture grac'd;
Where seemly rang'd in peaceful order stood
Ulysses' arms, now long disus'd to blood. 170.

He led the Goddesses to the sov'reign seat,
Her feet supported with a stool of state;

(A purple carpet spread the pavement wide);

Then drew his seat, familiar, to her side;

Far from the suitor-train, a brutal croud, 175.

With insolence, and wine, elate and loud:

Where the free guest, unnoted, might relate,

If haply conscious, of his father's fate.

The golden ew'r a maid obsequious brings,

Replenish'd from the cool, translucent springs; 180.

With copious water the bright vase supplies

A silver laver, of capacious size:

They wash. The tables in fair order spread,

They heap the glitt'ring canisters with bread:

Viands of various kinds allure the taste, 185.

Of choicest sort and savour, rich repast!

Delicious wines th' attending herald brought;

The gold gave lustre to the purple draught.

Lur'd with the vapour of the fragrant feast,

In rush'd the suitors with voracious haste; 190.

Marshall'd in order due, to each a few'r

Presents, to bathe his hands, a radiant ew'r.

Luxurious then they feast. Observant round

Gay stripling youths the brimming goblets crown'd.

The rage of hunger quell'd, they all advance, 195.

And form to measur'd airs the mazy dance:

To Phemius was consign'd the chorded lyre,

Whose hand reluctant touch'd the warbling wire;

Phemius, whose voice divine could sweetest sing

High strains, responsive to the vocal string. 200.

Meanwhile, in whispers to his heav'nly guest,

His indignation thus the prince express.

Indulge my rising grief, whilst these (my friend)

With song and dance the pompous revel end.

Light:

Light is the dance, and doubly sweet the lays, 205
 When, for the dear delight, another pays.
 His treasur'd stores these cormorants consume,
 Whose bones, defrauded of a regal tomb
 And common turf, lie naked on the plain,
 Or doom'd to welter in the whelming main. 210
 Should he return, that troop so blithe and bold,
 With purple robes inwrought, and stiff with gold,
 Precipitant in fear, would wing their flight,
 And curse their cumbrous pride's unwieldy weight.
 But ah I dream!—th' appointed hour is fled, 215
 And hope, too long with vain delusion fed,
 Deaf to the rumour of fallacious fame,
 Gives to the roll of death his glorious name!
 With venial freedom let me now demand
 Thy name, thy lineage, and paternal land : 220
 Sincere, from whence began thy course, recite,
 And to what ship I owe the friendly freight?
 Now first to me this visit dost thou deign,
 Or number'd in my father's social train?
 All who deserv'd his choice, he made his own, 225
 And curious much to know, he far was known.
 My birth I boast (the blue-ey'd virgin cries)
 From great Anchialus, renown'd and wise:
 Mentos my name; I rule the Taphian race,
 Whose bounds the deep circumfluent waves embrace:
 A duteous people, and industrious isle, 231
 To naval arts inur'd, and stormy toil.
 Freight'd with iron from my native land,
 I steer my voyage to the Brutian strand;
 To gain by commerce, for the labour'd mass, 235
 A just proportion of refulgent brass.
 Far from your capital my ship resides
 At Reithrus, and secure at anchor rides;
 Where waving groves on airy Neion grow,
 Supremely tall, and shade the deeps below. 240
 Thence to revisit your imperial dome,
 An old, hereditary guest I come:
 Your father's friend. Laertes can relate
 Our faith unspotted, and its early date;

Who,

Who, press'd with heart corroding grief and years, 245
 To the gay court a rural shade prefers;
 Where, sole of all his train, a matron sage
 Supports with homely food his drooping age,
 With feeble steps from marshalling his vines
 Returning sad, when toilsome day declines. 250

With friendly speed, induc'd by erring fame,
 To hail Ulysses' safe return I came:
 But still the frown of some celestial pow'r
 With envious joy retards the blissful hour.
 Let not your soul be sunk in sad despair; 255

He lives, he breathes this heavenly, vital air,
 Among a savage race, whose shelfy bounds
 With ceaseless roar the foaming deep surrounds.
 The thoughts which roll within my ravish'd breast,
 To me, no secret, th' inspiring Gods suggest; 260
 Nor skill'd, nor studious, with prophetic eye
 To judge the winged omens of the sky.

Yet hear this certain speech, nor deem it vain;
 Though adamantine bonds the chief restrain,
 The dire restraint his wisdom will defeat, 265
 And soon restore him to his regal seat.

But, gen'rous youth! sincere and free declare,
 Are you, of manly growth, his royal heir?
 For sure Ulysses in your look appears,
 The same his features, if the same his years. 270
 Such was that face, on which I dwelt with joy
 Ere Greece assembled stemm'd the tides to Troy;
 But parting then for that detested shore,
 Our eyes, unhappy! never greeted more.

To prove a genuine birth, (the prince replies), 275
 On female truth assenting faith relies;
 Thus manifest of right, I build my claim
 Sure-founded on a fair maternal fame,
 Ulysses' son: but happier he, whom fate
 Hath plac'd beneath the storms which toss the great! 280
 Happier the son, whose hoary sire is blest
 With humble affluence, and domestic rest!
 Happier than I, to future empire born,
 But doom'd a father's wretched fate to mourn!

To

Book I. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 11

To whom, with aspect mild, the guest divine : 285
 Oh true descendent of a sceptred line !
 The Gods, a glorious fate, from anguish free,
 To chaste Penelope's increase decree.
 But say, yon jovial troop so gaily drest,
 Is this a bridal or a friendly feast ! 290
 Or from their deed I rightlier may divine,
 Unseemly shewn with insolence and wine ;
 Unwelcome revellers, whose lawless joy
 Pain the sage ear, and hurts the sober eye.
 Magnificence of old (the prince reply'd) 295
 Beneath our roof with virtue could reside ;
 Unblam'd abundance crown'd the royal board,
 What time this dome rever'd her prudent lord ;
 Who now (so heav'n decrees) is doom'd to mourn,
 Bitter constraint ! erroneous and forlorn. 300
 Better the chief, on Ilion's hostile plain,
 Had fall'n, surrounded with his warlike train ;
 Or safe return'd, the race of glory past,
 New to his friends embrace, had breath'd his last !
 Then grateful Greece with streaming eyes would raise
 Historic marbles, to record his praise ; 306
 His praise, eternal on the faithful stone,
 Had with transmissive honour grac'd his son.
 Now snatch'd by harpies to the dreary coast,
 Sunk is the hero, and his glory lost : 310
 Vanish'd at once ! unheard-of, and unknown !
 And I his heir in misery alone.
 Nor for a dear, lost father only flow
 The filial tears, but wo succeeds to wo :
 To tempt the spouseless queen with am'rous wiles, 315
 Resort the nobles from the neighb'ring isles ;
 From Samos, circled with th' Ionian main,
 Dulichium, and Zacynthus' sylvan reign :
 Ev'n with presumptuous hope her bed t' ascend,
 The lords of Ithaca their right pretend. 320
 She seems attentive to their pleaded vows,
 Her heart detesting what her ear allows.
 They, vain expectants of the bridal hour,
 My stores in riotous expense devour,

In feast and dance the mirthful months employ, 325
And meditate my doom, to crown their joy.

With tender pity touch'd, the Goddess cry'd :
Soon may kind heav'n a sure relief provide !
Soon may your fire discharge the vengeance due,
And all your wrongs the proud oppressors rue ! 330

Oh ! in that portal should the chief appear,
Each hand tremendous with a brazen spear,
In radiant panoply his limbs incas'd ;
(For so of old my father's court he grac'd,
When social mirth unbent his serious soul,
O'er the full banquet, and the sprightly bowl) ; 335

He then from Ephyré, the fair domain
Of Ilus, sprung from Jason's royal strain,
Measur'd a length of seas, a toilsome length, in vain. }
For voyaging to learn the direful art 340

To taint with deadly drugs the barbed dart ;
Observant of the Gods, and sternly just,
Ilus refus'd t' impart the baneful trust :
With friendlier zeal my father's soul was fir'd,
The drugs he knew, and gave the boon desir'd. 345

Appear'd he now with such heroic port,
As then conspicuous at the Taphian court ;
Soon should yon boasters cease their haughty strife,
Or each atone his guilty love with life.
But of his wish'd return the care resign ; 350

Be future vengeance to the pow'rs divine.
My sentence hear : with stern distaste avow'd,
To their own districts drive the suitor-croud :
When next the morning warms the purple east,
Convoke the peerage, and the gods attest ; 355

The sorrows of your inmost soul relate ;
And form sure plans to save the sinking state.
Should second love a pleasing flame inspire,
And the chaste queen connubial rites require ;
Dismiss'd with honour, let her hence repair 360

To great Icarius, whose paternal care
Will guide her passion, and reward her choice
With wealthy dow'r, and bridal gifts of price.

Then

Then let this dictate of my love prevail :
 Instant, to foreign realms prepare to sail, 365
 To learn your father's fortunes : fame may prove,
 Or omen'd voice, (the messenger of Jove),
 Propitious to the search. Direct your toil
 Through the wide ocean, first to sandy Pyle;
 Of Nestor, hoary sage, his doom demand : 370
 Thence speed your voyage to the Spartan strand ;
 For young Atreides to th' Achaian coast
 Arriv'd the last of all the victor host.
 If yet Ulysses views the light ; forbear,
 Till the fleet hours restore the circling year. 375
 But if his soul hath wing'd the destin'd flight,
 Inhabitant of deep disastrous night ;
 Homeward with pious speed repass the main,
 To the pale shade funereal rites ordain,
 Plant the fair column o'er the vacant grave, 380
 A hero's honours let the hero have.
 With decent grief the royal dead deplor'd,
 For the chaste queen select an equal lord.
 Then let revenge your daring mind employ,
 By fraud or force the suitor-train destroy, 385 }
 And starting into manhood, scorn the boy.
 Hast thou not heard how young Orestes, fir'd
 With great revenge, immortal praise acquir'd ?
 His virgin-sword Ægysthus' veins imbru'd ;
 The murd'rer fell, and blood aton'd for blood. 390
 O greatly blest'd with ev'ry blooming grace !
 With equal steps the paths of glory trace ;
 Join to that royal youth's your rival name,
 And shine eternal in the sphere of fame. —
 But my associates now my stay deplore, 395
 Impatient on the hoarse-resounding shore.
 Thou, heedful of advice, secure proceed ;
 My praise the precept is, be thine the deed.
 The counsel of my friend (the youth rejoin'd)
 Imprints conviction on my grateful mind. 400
 So fathers speak (persuasive speech and mild)
 Their sage experience to the fav'rite child.

But, since to part, for sweet refection due
 The genial viands let my train renew :
 And the rich pledge of plighted faith receive, 405
 Worthy the heir of Ithaca to give.

Defer the promis'd boon, (the goddess cries,
 Celestial azure bright'ning in her eyes),
 And let me now regain the Reithrian port :
 From Temesé return'd, your royal court 410
 I shall revisit ; and that pledge receive ;
 And gifts, memorial of our friendship, leave.

Abrupt, with eagle-speed she cut the sky ;
 Instant invisible to mortal eye.

Then first he recognis'd th' æthereal guest ; 415
 Wonder and joy alternate fire his breast :
 Heroic thoughts, infus'd, his heart dilate :
 Revolving much his father's doubtful fate,
 At length, compos'd, he join'd the suitor-throng,
 Hush'd in attention to the warbled song. 420

His tender theme the charming lyrist chose,
 Minerva's anger, and the direful woes
 Which voyaging from Troy the victors bore,
 While storms vindictive intercept the shore.
 The shrilling airs the vaulted roof rebounds, 425
 Reflecting to the queen the silver sounds.

With grief renew'd, the weeping fair descends ;
 Their sov'reign's step a virgin train attends :
 A veil of richest texture wrought she wears,
 And silent to the joyous hall repairs. 430

There from the portal, with her mild command
 Thus gently checks the minstrel's tuneful hapd.

Phemius ! let acts of Gods, and heroes old,
 What ancient bards in hall and bow'r have told,
 Attemper'd to the lyre, your voice employ : 435
 Such the pleas'd ear will drink with silent joy.

But oh ! forbear that dear, disastrous name,
 To sorrow sacred, and secure of fame :
 My bleeding bosom sickens at the sound,
 And ev'ry piercing note inflicts a wound. 440

Why, dearest object of my duteous love,
 (Reply'd the prince), will you the bard reprove ?

Oft Jove's æthereal rays (resistless fire)
 The chanter's soul and raptur'd song inspire ;
 Instinct divine ! nor blame severe his choice, 445
 Warbling the Grecian woes with harp and voice :
 For novel lays attract our ravish'd ears ;
 But old, the mind with inattention hears ;
 Patient permit the sadly-pleasing strain ;
 Familiar now with grief, your tears refrain, 450
 And in the public wo forget your own ;
 You weep not for a perish'd lord, alone.
 What Greeks, now wand'ring in the Stygian gloom,
 With your Ulysses shar'd an equal doom !
 Your widow'd hours, apart, with female toil 455
 And various labours of the loom, beguile ;
 There rule, from palace-cares remote and free,
 That care to man belongs, and most to me.

Mature beyond his years, the queen admires
 His sage reply, and with her train retires. 460
 Then swelling sorrows burst their former bounds,
 With echoing grief afresh the dome resounds ;
 Till Pallas, piteous of her plaintive cries,
 In slumber clos'd her silver-streaming eyes.

Meantime, rekindled at the royal charms, 465
 Tumultuous love each beating bosom warms ;
 Intemp'rate rage a wordy war began ;
 But bold Telemachus assum'd the man.
 Instant (he cry'd) yor female discord end,
 Ye deedless boasters ! and the song attend ; 470
 Obey that sweet compulsion, nor profane
 With dissonance the smooth melodious strain.
 Pacific now prolong the jovial feast ;
 But when the dawn reveals the rosy east,
 I, to the peers assembled, shall propose 475
 The firm resolve, I here in few disclose.
 No longer live the cankers of my court ;
 All to your sev'ral states with speed resort ;
 Waste in wild riot what your land allows,
 There ply the early feast, and late carouse. 480
 But if, to honour lost, 'tis still decreed
 For you my bowl shall flow, my flock shall bleed ;

Judge and revenge my right, impartial Jove! —
 By him, and all th' immortal thrones above,
 (A sacred oath), each proud oppressor, slain, 485
 Shall with inglorious gore this marble stain.

Aw'd by the prince, thus haughty, bold, and young,
 Rage gnaw'd the lip, and wonder chain'd the tongue.
 Silence, at length, the gay Antinous broke,
 Constrain'd a smile, and thus ambiguous spoke. 490
 What God to your untutor'd youth affords
 This headlong torrent of amazing words?
 May Jove delay thy reign, and cumber late
 So bright a genius with the toils of state!

Those toils (Telemachus serene replies) 495
 Have charms, with all their weight, t' allure the wife.
 Fast by the throne obsequious fame resides,
 And wealth incessant rolls her golden tides.
 Nor let Antinous rage, if strong desire
 Of wealth and fame a youthful bosom fire: 500
 Elect by Jove his delegate of sway,
 With joyous pride the summons I'd obey.
 Whene'er Ulysses roams the realm of night,
 Should factious pow'r dispute my lineal right,
 Some other Greeks a fairer claim may plead; 505
 To your pretence their title would precede.
 At least, the sceptre lost, I still should reign
 Sole o'er my vassals, and domestic train.

To this Eurymachus: To heav'n alone
 Refer the choice to fill the vacant throne. 510
 Your patrimonial stores in peace possess;
 Undoubted all your filial claim confess:
 Your private right should impious pow'r invade,
 The peers of Ithaca would arm in aid.
 But say, that stranger-guest who late withdrew, 515
 What, and from whence? his name and lineage shew.
 His grave demeanour, and majestic grace
 Speak him descended of no vulgar race:
 Did he some loan of ancient right require,
 Or came forerunner of your sceptred fire? 520

Oh son of Polybus! the prince replies,
 No more my fire will glad these longing eyes:

The

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The queen's fond hope inventive rumour cheers,
Or vain diviners' dreams divert her fears.
That stranger-guest the Taphian realm obeys, 525
A realm defended with incircling seas.
Mentes, an ever-honour'd name, of old
High in Ulysses' social list inroll'd.

Thus he, though conscious of th' æthereal guest,
Answer'd evasive of the sly request. 530
Meantime the lyre rejoins the sprightly lay;
Love-dittied airs, and dance, conclude the day.
But when the star of eve, with golden light,
Adorn'd the matron-brow of sable night;
The mirthful train dispersing quit the court, 535
And to their sev'ral domes to rest resort.
A tow'ring structure to the palace join'd;
To this his steps the thoughtful prince inclin'd;
In his pavilion there, to sleep repairs;
The lighted torch the sage Euryclea bears: 540
(Daughter of Ops, the just Pisenor's son,
For twenty beeves by great Laertes won;
In rosy prime, with charms attractive grac'd,
Honour'd by him, a gentle lord and chaste,
With dear esteem: too wise, with jealous strife 545
To taint the joys of sweet, connubial life.
Sole with Telemachus her service ends,
A child she nurs'd him, and a man attends.)
Whilst to his couch himself the prince address'd,
The duteous dame receiv'd the purple vest; 550
The purple vest with decent care dispos'd,
The silver ring she pull'd, the door reclos'd;
The bolt, obedient to the silken cord,
To the strong staple's inmost depth restor'd,
Secur'd the valves. There, wrapt in silent shade, 555
Pensive, the rules the Goddess gave, he weigh'd;
Stretch'd on the downy fleece, no rest he knows,
And in his raptur'd soul the vision glows.

T H E O D Y S S E Y.

B O O K II.

T H E A R G U M E N T.

The council of Ithaca.

Telemachus, in the assembly of the lords of Ithaca, complains of the injustice done him by the suitors, and insists upon their departure from his palace ; appealing to the princes, and exciting the people to declare against them. The suitors endeavour to justify their stay, at least till he shall send the queen to the court of Icarius her father ; which he refuses. There appears a prodigy of two eagles in the sky, which an augur expounds to the ruin of the suitors. Telemachus then demands a vessel to carry him to Pylos and Sparta, there to inquire of his father's fortunes. Pallas, in the shape of Mentor, (an ancient friend of Ulysses) ; helps him to a ship, assists him in preparing necessaries for the voyage, and embarks with him that night ; which concludes the second day from the opening of the poem.

The scene continues in the palace of Ulysses in Ithaca.

NOW redd'ning from the dawn, the morning-ray
Glow'd in the front of heav'n, and gave the day.
The youthful hero, with returning light,
Rose anxious from th' inquietudes of night.
A royal robe he wore with graceful pride, 5
A two-edg'd faulchion threaten'd by his side,
Embroider'd sandals glitter'd as he trod,
And forth he mov'd, majestic as a god.
Then by his heralds, restless of delay,
To council calls the peers : the peers obey. 10
Soon

Soon as in solemn form th' assembly sat,
From his high dome himself descends in state.
Bright in his hand a pond'rous jav'lin shin'd ;
Two dogs, a faithful guard, attend behind ;
Pallas with grace divine his form improves, 15
And gazing crouds admire him as he moves.

His father's throne he fill'd : while distant stood
The hoary peers, and aged wisdom bow'd.

'Twas silence all ; at last Ægyptius spoke ;
Ægyptius, by his age and sorrows broke : 20
A length of days his soul with prudence crown'd,
A length of days had bent him to the ground.
His eldest * hope in arms to Ilion came,
By great Ulysses taught the path to fame ;
But, hapless youth, the hideous Cyclops tore 25
His quiv'ring limbs, and quaff'd his spouting gore.
Three sons remain'd : to climb with haughty fires
The royal bed, Eurynomus aspires ;
The rest with duteous love his griefs assuage,
And ease the fire of half the cares of age. 30
Yet still his Antiphus he loves, he mourns,
And as he stood, he spoke and wept by turns.

Since great Ulysses fought the Phrygian plains,
Within these walls inglorious silence reigns.
Say then, ye peers ! by whose commands we meet ?
Why here once more in solemn council sit ? 36
Ye young, ye old, the weighty cause disclose :
Arrives some message of invading foes ?
Or say, does high necessity of state
Inspire some patriot, and demand debate ! 40
The present synod speaks its author wise ;
Assist him, Jove, thou regent of the skies !

He spoke. Telemachus with transport glows,
Embrac'd the omen, and majestic rose :
(His royal hand th' imperial sceptre sway'd) ; 45
Then thus, addressing to Ægyptius, said.

Rev'rend old man ! lo here confess'd he stands
By whom ye meet ; my grief your care demands.

* Antiphus.

No story I unfold of public woes,
 Nor bear advices of impending foes : 50
 Peace the blest'd land, and joys incessant crown ;
 Of all this happy realm, I grieve alone.
 For my lost fire continual sorrows spring ;
 The great, the good ; your father, and your king.
 Yet more ; our house from its foundation bows, 55
 Our foes are pow'rful, and your sons the foes :
 Hither, unwelcome, to the queen they come ;
 Why seek they not the rich Icarian dome ?
 If she must wed, from other hands require
 The dow'ry : is Telemachus her fire ? 60
 Yet through my court the noise of revel rings,
 And wastes the wise frugality of kings.
 Scarce all my herds their luxury suffice ;
 Scarce all my wine their midnight-hours supplies.
 Safe in my youth, in riot still they grow, 65
 Nor in the helpless orphan dread a foe.
 But come it will, the time when manhood grants
 More pow'rful advocates than vain complaints.
 Approach that hour ! unsufferable wrong
 Cries to the gods, and vengeance sleeps too long. 70
 Rise then, ye peers ! with virtuous anger rise ;
 Your fame revere, but most th' avenging skies.
 By all the deathless powers that reign above,
 By righteous Themis, and by thund'ring Jove,
 (Themis, who gives to councils, or denies 75
 Success, and humbles or confirms the wise),
 Rise in my aid ! suffice the tears that flow
 For my lost fire, nor add new wo to wo.
 If e'er he bore the sword to strengthen ill,
 Or, having pow'r to wrong, betray'd the will ; 80
 On me, on me your kindled wrath assuage,
 And bid the voice of lawless riot rage.
 If ruin to our royal race ye doom,
 Be you the spoilers, and our wealth consume.
 Then might we hope redress from juster laws, 85
 And raise all Ithaca to aid our cause :
 But while your sons commit th' unpunish'd wrong,
 You make the arm of violence too strong.

While

While thus he spoke, with rage and grief he frown'd,
And dash'd th' imperial sceptre to the ground. 90

The big round tear hung trembling in his eye :
The synod griev'd, and gave a pitying sigh,
Then silent sat — at length Antinous burns
With haughty rage, and sternly thus returns.

O insolence of youth ! whose tongue affords 95
Such railing eloquence, and war of words.
Studious thy country's worthies to defame,
Thy erring voice displays thy mother's shame.

Elusive of the bridal day, she gives
Fond hopes to all, and all with hopes deceives. 100

Did not the sun, through heav'n's wide azure roll'd,
For three long years the royal fraud behold ?

While she, laborious in delusion, spread
The spacious loom, and mix'd the various thread :

Where as to life the wondrous figures rise, 105
Thus spoke th' inventive queen, with artful sighs.

“ Though cold in death Ulysses breathes no more,

“ Cease yet a while to urge the bridal hour ;

“ Cease, till to great Laertes I bequeath

“ A task of grief, his ornaments of death : 110

“ Lest when the fates his royal ashes claim,

“ The Grecian matrons taint my spotless fame ;

“ When he, whom living mighty realms obey'd,

“ Shall want in death a shroud to grace his shade.”

Thus she : at once the gen'rous train complies, 115

Nor fraud mistrusts in virtue's fair disguise.

The work she ply'd ; but, studious of delay,

By night revers'd the labours of the day.

While thrice the sun his annual journey made,

The conscious lamp the midnight-fraud survey'd ; 120

Unheard, unseen, three years her arts prevail ;

The fourth, her maid unfolds th' amazing tale.

We saw, as unperceiv'd we took our stand,

The backward labours of her faithless hand.

Then urg'd, she perfects her illustrious toils ; 125

A wondrous monument of female wiles !

But you, oh peers ! and thou, oh prince ! give ear :

(I speak aloud, that ev'ry Greek may hear) :

Dismiss

Dismiss the queen ; and if her fire approves,
 Let him espouse her to the peer she loves : 130
 Bid instant to prepare the bridal train,
 Nor let a race of princes wait in vain.
 Though with a grace divine her soul is blest,
 And all Minerva breathes within her breast ;
 In wondrous arts than woman more renown'd, 135
 And more than woman with deep wisdom crown'd ;
 Though Tyro nor Mycene match her name,
 Nor great Alcmena, (the proud boasts of fame),
 Yet thus by heav'n adorn'd, by heav'n's decree
 She shines with fatal excellence, to thee : 140
 With thee, the bowl we drain, indulge the feast,
 Till righteous heav'n reclaim her stubborn breast.
 What though from pole to pole resounds her name !
 The son's destruction waits the mother's fame :
 For till she leaves thy court, it is decreed, 145
 Thy bowl to empty, and thy flock to bleed.
 While yet he speaks, Telemachus replies.
 Ev'n nature starts, and what ye ask denies.
 Thus, shall I thus repay a mother's cares,
 Who gave me life, and nurs'd my infant-years ? 150
 While sad on foreign shores Ulysses treads,
 Or glides a ghost with unapparent shades ;
 How to Icarius in the bridal hour
 Shall I, by waste undone, refund the dow'r ?
 How from my father should I vengeance dread ? 155
 How would my mother curse my hated head ?
 And while in wrath to vengeful fiends she cries,
 How from their hell would vengeful fiends arise ?
 Abhor'd by all, accurs'd my name would grow,
 The earth's disgrace, and human kind my foe. 160
 If this displease, why urge ye here your stay ?
 Haste from the court, ye spoilers, haste away :
 Waste in wild riot what your land allows,
 There ply the early feast, and late carouse.
 But if, to honour lost, 'tis still decreed 165
 For you my bowl shall flow, my flocks shall bleed ;
 Judge and assert my right, impartial Jove !
 By him, and all th' immortal host above,

(A sacred oath), if heav'n the pow'r supply,
Vengeance I vow, and for your wrongs ye die. 170

With that, two eagles from a mountain's height
By Jove's command direct their rapid flight;
Swift they descend, with wing to wing conjoin'd,
Stretch their broad plumes, and float upon the wind.
Above th' assembled peers they wheel on high, 175
And clang their wings, and hovering beat the sky;
With ardent eyes the rival train they threat,
And shrieking loud, denounce approaching fate.
They cuff, they tear; their cheeks and necks they rend,
And from their plumes huge drops of blood descend:
Then sailing o'er the domes and tow'rs, they fly 181
Full tow'rd the east, and mount into the sky.

The wond'ring rivals gaze with cares oppress'd,
And chilling horrors freeze in every breast.
Till big with knowledge of approaching woes 185
The prince of augurs, Halitherses, rose:
Prescient he view'd th' æreal tracts, and drew
A sure presage from every wing that flew.

Ye sons (he cry'd) of Ithaca, give ear,
Hear all! but chiefly you, oh rivals! hear. 190
Destruction sure o'er all your heads impends;
Ulysses comes, and death his steps attends.
Nor to the great alone is death decreed;
We, and our guilty Ithaca must bleed.
Why cease we then the wrath of heav'n to stay? 195
Be humbled all, and lead, ye great! the way.
For lo! my words no fancy'd woes relate:
I speak from science, and the voice is fate.

When great Ulysses fought the Phrygian shores,
To shake with war proud Ilion's lofty tow'rs, 200
Deeds then undone my faithful tongue foretold:
Heav'n seal'd my words, and you those deeds behold.
I see (I cry'd) his woes, a countless train;
I see his friends o'erwhelm'd beneath the main;
How twice ten years from shore to shore he roams;
Now twice ten years are past, and now he comes! 206

To whom Eurymachus — Fly, dotard, fly!
With thy wise dreams, and fables of the sky.

Go prophesy at home; thy sons advise :
 Here thou art sage in vain — I better read the skies.
 Unnumber'd birds glide through th' aëreal way, 210
 Vagrants of air, and unforeboding stray.
 Cold in the tomb, or in the deeps below
 Ulysses lies : oh wert thou laid as low !
 Then would that busy head no broils suggest, 215
 Nor fire to rage Telemachus's breast.
 From him some bribe thy venal tongue requires,
 And int'rest, not the God, thy voice inspires.
 His guideless youth, if thy experienc'd age
 Mislead fallacious into idle rage, 220
 Vengeance deserv'd, thy malice shall repress,
 And but augment the wrongs thou wouldst redress.
 Telemachus may bid the queen repair
 To great Icarius, whose paternal care
 Will guide her passion, and reward her choice, 225
 With wealthy dow'r, and bridal gifts of price.
 Till she retires, determin'd we remain,
 And both the prince and augur threat in vain :
 His pride of words, and thy wild dream of fate,
 Move not the brave, or only move their hate. 230
 Threat on, oh prince ! elude the bridal day,
 Threat on, till all thy stores in waste decay.
 True, Greece affords a train of lovely dames,
 In wealth and beauty worthy of our flames :
 But never from this nobler suit we cease ; 235
 For wealth and beauty less than virtue please.
 To whom the youth : Since then in vain I tell
 My num'rous woes, in silence let them dwell.
 But heav'n, and all the Greeks, have heard my wrongs :
 To heav'n, and all the Greeks, redress belongs. 240
 Yet this I ask (nor be it ask'd in vain)
 A bark to waft me o'er the rolling main ;
 The realms of Pyle and Sparta to explore,
 And seek my royal sire from shore to shore :
 If, or to fame his doubtful fate be known, 245
 Or to be learn'd from oracles alone ?
 If yet he lives; with patience I forbear,
 Till the fleet hours restore the circling year :

But

But if already wand'ring in the train
Of empty shades ; I measure back the main, 250
Plant the fair column o'er the mighty dead,
And yield his consort to the nuptial bed.

He ceas'd ; and while abash'd the peers attend,
Mentor arose, Ulysses' faithful friend :
[When fierce in arms he fought the scenes of war, 255
" My friend," (he cry'd), " my palace be thy care ;
" Years roll'd on years my godlike fire decay,
" Guard thou his age, and his behests obey."]

Stern as he rose, he cast his eyes around,
That flash'd with rage ; and as he spoke, he frown'd.

O never, never more ! let king be just, 261
Be mild in pow'r, or faithful to his trust !
Let tyrants govern with an iron rod,

Oppress, destroy, and be the scourge of God ;
Since he who like a father held his reign, 265
So soon forgot, was just and mild in vain !

True, while my friend is griev'd, his griefs I share ;
Yet now the rivals are my smallest care :

They, for the mighty mischiefs they devise,
Ere long shall pay — their forfeit lives the price. 270

But against you, ye Greeks ! ye coward train,
Gods ! how my soul is mov'd with just disdain ?
Dumb ye all stand, and not one tongue affords
His injur'd prince the little aid of words.

While yet he spoke, Leocritus rejoin'd : 275
O pride of words, and arrogance of mind !

Wouldst thou to rise in arms the Greeks advise ?
Join all your pow'rs ! in arms, ye Greeks, arise !
Yet would your pow'rs in vain our strength oppose ;
The valiant few o'ermatch an host of foes. 280

Should great Ulysses stern appear in arms,
While the bowl circles, and the banquet warms ;
Though to his breast his spouse with transport flies,
Torn from her breast, that hour, Ulysses dies.

But hence retreating to your domes repair ; 285
To arm the vessel, Mentor ! be thy care,
And Halitherses ! thine : be each his friend :
Ye lov'd the father : go, the son attend.

But yet, I trust, the boaster means to stay
Safe in the court, nor tempt the wat'ry way. 290

Then, with a rushing sound, th' assembly bend,
Diverse their steps: the rival rout ascend
The royal dome; while sad the prince explores
The neighb'ring main, and sorrowing treads the shores.
There, as the waters o'er his hands he shed, 295
The royal suppliant to Minerva pray'd.

O Goddess! who descending from the skies
Vouchsaf'd thy presence to my wond'ring eyes,
By whose commands the raging deeps I trace,
And seek my fire through storms and rolling seas! 300
Hear from thy heav'ns above, oh warrior-maid!
Descend once more, propitious to my aid.
Without thy presence, vain is thy command;
Greece, and the rival train, thy voice withstand.

Indulgent to his pray'r, the Goddess took 305
Sage Mentor's form, and thus like Mentor spoke.

O prince, in early youth divinely wise,
Born, the Ulysses of thy age to rise!
If to the son the father's worth descends,
O'er the wide waves success thy ways attends: 310
To tread the walks of death he stood prepar'd,
And what he greatly thought, he nobly dar'd.
Were not wise sons descendent of the wise,
And did not heroes from brave heroes rise,
Vain were my hopes: few sons attain the praise 315
Of their great fires, and most their fires disgrace.
But since thy veins paternal virtue fires,
And all Penelope thy soul inspires,
Go, and succeed! the rivals aims despise;
For never, never, wicked man was wise. 320
Blind they rejoice, though now, ev'n now they fall;
Death haltes amain: one hour o'erwhelms them all!
And lo, with speed we plough the wat'ry way;
My pow'r shall guard thee, and my hand convey:
The winged vessel studious I prepare, 325
Through seas and realms companion of thy care.
Thou to the court ascend; and to the shores
(When night advances) bear the naval stores;

Bread,

Bread, that decaying man with strength supplies,
 And gen'rous wine, which thoughtful sorrow flies. 330
 Meanwhile the mariners by my command
 Shall speed aboard, a valiant chosen band.
 Wide o'er the bay, by vessel vessel rides;
 The best I chuse to waft thee o'er the tides.

She spoke: to his high dome the prince returns, 335
 And as he moves, with royal anguish mourns.
 'Twas riot all among the lawless train;
 Boar bled by boar, and goat by goat lay slain.
 Arriv'd, his hand the gay Antinous press'd,
 And thus deriding, with a smile address'd. 340

Grieve not, oh daring prince! that noble heart;
 Ill suits gay youth the stern heroic part.
 Indulge the genial hour, unbend thy soul,
 Leave thought to age, and drain the flowing bowl.
 Studious to ease thy grief, our care provides 345
 The bark, to waft thee o'er the swelling tides.

Is this (returns the prince) for mirth a time?
 When lawless gluttons riot, mirth's a crime;
 The luscious wines, dishonour'd, lose their taste;
 The song is noise, and impious is the feast. 350
 Suffice it to have spent with swift decay

The wealth of kings, and made my youth a prey.
 But now the wise instructions of the sage,
 And manly thoughts inspir'd by manly age,
 Teach me to seek redress for all my woe, 355
 Here, or in Pyle—in Pyle, or here, your foe.
 Deny your vessels, ye deny in vain;
 A private voyager I pass the main.

Free breathe the winds, and free the billows flow,
 And where on earth I live, I live your foe. 360

He spoke and frown'd; nor longer deign'd to stay,
 Sternly his hand withdrew, and strode away.

Meantime, o'er all the dome, they quaff, they feast,
 Derisive taunts were spread from guest to guest,
 And each in jovial mood his mate address'd. }

Tremble ye not, oh friends! and coward fly, 366
 Doom'd by the stern Telemachus to die?
 To Pyle or Sparta to demand supplies,
 Big with revenge, the mighty warrior flies:

Or comes from Ephyre with poisons fraught, 370
And kills us all in one tremendous draught?

Or who can say, (his gamesome mate replies),
But while the dangers of the deeps he tries,
He, like his fire, may sink, depriv'd of breath,
And punish us unkindly by his death? 375
What mighty labours would he then create,
To seize his treasures, and divide his state,
The royal palace to the queen convey,
Or him she blesses in the bridal day!

Meantime the lofty rooms the prince furveys, 380
Where lay the treasures of th' Ithacian race:
Here ruddy brass and gold refulgent blaz'd;
'There polish'd chests embroider'd vestures grac'd;
Here jars of oil breath'd forth a rich perfume;
There casks of wine in rows adorn'd the dome. 385
(Pure flav'rous wine, by Gods in bounty giv'n,
And worthy to exalt the feasts of heav'n.)

Untouch'd they stood, till his long labours o'er
The great Ulysses reach'd his native shore.
A double strength of bars secur'd the gates: 390
Fast by the door the wise Euryclea waits;
Euryclea, who, great Ops! thy lineage shar'd,
And watch'd all night, all day; a faithful guard.

To whom the prince: O thou, whose guardian care
Nurs'd the most wretched king that breathes the air!
Untouch'd and sacred may these vessels stand, 396
Till great Ulysses views his native land.

But by thy care twelve urns of wine be fill'd,
Next these in worth, and firm those urns be seal'd;
And twice ten measures of the choicest flour 400
Prepar'd, ere yet descends the ev'ning-hour.
For when the fav'ring shades of night arise,
And peaceful slumbers close my mother's eyes,
Me from our coast shall spreading sails convey,
To seek Ulysses through the wat'ry way. 405

While yet he spoke, she fill'd the walls with cries,
And tears ran trickling from her aged eyes.
Oh whither, whither flies my son? she cry'd,
To realms, that rocks and roaring seas divide?

Book II. HOMER'S ODYSSEY: 29

In foreign lands thy father's days decay'd, 410
 And foreign lands contain the mighty dead.
 The wat'ry way ill-fated if thou try,
 All, all must perish, and by fraud you die !
 Then stay, my child ! storms beat, and rolls the main ;
 Oh beat those storms, and roll the seas in vain ! 415

Far hence (reply'd the prince) thy fears be driv'n :
 Heav'n calls me forth ; these counsels are of heav'n.
 But by the pow'rs that hate the perjur'd, swear,
 To keep my voyage from the royal ear,
 Nor uncompell'd the dang'rous truth betray, 420
 Till twice six times descends the lamp of day :
 Lest the sad tale a mother's life impair,
 And grief destroy what time a while would spare.

Thus he. The matron with uplifted eyes
 Attests th' all-seeing sov'reign of the skies. 425
 Then studious she prepares the choicest flour,
 The strength of wheat, and wines an ample store.
 While to the rival train the prince returns,
 The martial Goddesses with impatience burn ;
 Like thee, Telemachus, in voice and size, 430
 With speed divine from street to street she flies,
 She bids the mariners prepar'd, to stand,
 When night descends, embody'd on the strand.
 Then to Noëmon swift she runs, she flies,
 And asks a bark : the chief a bark supplies. 435

And now, declining with his sloping wheels,
 Down sunk the sun behind the western hills.
 The Goddess shov'd the vessel from the shores,
 And stow'd within its womb the naval stores :
 Full in the op'nings of the spacious main 440
 It rides ; and now descends the sailor-train.

Next, to the court, impatient of delay,
 With rapid step the Goddess urg'd her way :
 There ev'ry eye with slumb'rous chains she bound,
 And dash'd the flowing goblet to the ground. 445
 Drowsy they rose, with heavy fumes oppress'd,
 Reel'd from the palace, and retir'd to rest.

Then thus, in Mentor's rev'rend form array'd,
 Spoke to Telemachus the martial maid.

Lo ! on the seas, prepar'd the vessel stands, 450
 Th' impatient mariner thy speed demands.
 Swift as she spoke, with rapid pace she leads ;
 The footsteps of the Deity he treads.
 Swift to the shore they move : along the strand
 The ready vessel rides, the sailors ready stand. 455
 He bids them bring their stores ; th' attending train
 Load the tall bark, and launch into the main.
 The prince and Goddess to the stern ascend ;
 To the strong stroke at once the rowers bend.
 Full from the west she bids fresh breezes blow ; 460
 The sable billows foam and roar below.
 The chief his orders gives ; th' obedient band
 With due observance wait the chief's command :
 With speed the mast they rear ; with speed unbind
 The spacious sheet, and stretch it to the wind. 465
 High o'er the roaring waves the spreading sails
 Bow the tall mast, and swell before the gales ;
 The crooked keel the parting surge divides,
 And to the stern retreating roll the tides.
 And now they ship their oars, and crown with wine
 The holy goblet to the pow'rs divine : 471
 Imploring all the Gods that reign above,
 But chief, the blue-ey'd progeny of Jove.
 Thus all the night they stem the liquid way,
 And end their voyage with the morning-ray. 475

T H B
O D Y S S E Y.

B O O K III.

THE ARGUMENT.

The interview of Telemachus and Nestor.

Telemachus, guided by Pallas in the shape of Mentor, arrives in the morning at Pylos, where Nestor and his sons are sacrificing on the sea-shore to Neptune. Telemachus declares the occasion of his coming, and Nestor relates what passed in their return from Troy, how their fleets were separated, and he never since heard of Ulysses. They discourse concerning the death of Agamemnon, the revenge of Orestes, and the injuries of the suitors. Nestor advises him to go to Sparta, and inquire further of Menelaus. The sacrifice ending with the night, Minerva vanishes from them in the form of an eagle. Telemachus is lodged in the palace. The next morning they sacrifice a bullock to Minerva, and Telemachus proceeds on his journey to Sparta, attended by Pisistratus.

The scene lies on the sea-shore of Pylos.

THE sacred sun, above the waters rais'd,
Through heav'n's eternal, brazen portals blaz'd;
And wide o'er earth diffus'd his cheering ray,
To Gods and men to give the golden day.
Now on the coast of Pyle the vessel falls,
Before old Neleus' venerable walls.
There, suppliant to the monarch of the flood,
At nine green theatres the Pylians stood,
Each held five hundred, (a deputed train),
At each, nine oxen on the sand lay slain.

10
They

They taste the entrails, and the altars load
 With smoking thighs, an offering to the God.
 Full for the port the Ithacensians stand,
 And furl their sails, and issue on the land.

Telemachus already press'd the shore ;
 Not first, the pow'r of wisdom march'd before,
 And ere the sacrificing throng he join'd,
 Admonish'd thus his well-attending mind.

15

Proceed, my son! this youthful shame expel ;
 An honest business never blush to tell.

20

To learn what fates thy wretched fire detain,
 We pass'd the wide, immeasurable main.
 Meet then the senior far renown'd for sense,
 With rev'rend awe, but decent confidence :
 Urge him with truth to frame his fair replies :
 And sure he will ; for wisdom never lies.

25

Oh tell me, Mentor ! tell me, faithful guide,
 (The youth with prudent modesty reply'd),
 How shall I meet, or how accost the sage,
 Unskill'd in speech, nor yet mature of age ?
 Awful th' approach, and hard the task appears,
 To question wisely men of riper years.

30

To whom the martial Goddess thus rejoin'd.
 Search, for some thoughts, thy own suggesting mind ;
 And others, dictated by heav'nly pow'r,
 Shall rise spontaneous in the needful hour.
 For nought unprosperous shall thy ways attend,
 Born with good omens, and with heav'n thy friend.

35

She spoke, and led the way with swiftest speed :
 As swift the youth pursu'd the way she led ;
 And join'd the band before the sacred fire,
 Where sat, encompass'd with his sons, the fire.
 The youth of Pylos, some on pointed wood
 Transfix'd the fragments, some prepar'd the food.
 In friendly throngs they gather to embrace
 Their unknown guests, and at the banquet place.
 Pisistratus was first, to grasp their hands,
 And spread soft hides upon the yellow sands ;
 Along the shore th' illustrious pair he led,
 Where Nestor sat with youthful Thrasymed.

40

45

50
To

To each a portion of the feast he bore,
 And held a golden goblet foaming o'er ;
 Then first approaching to the elder guest,
 The latent Goddess in these words address.
 Whoe'er thou art, whom fortune brings to keep 55
 These rites of Neptune, monarch of the deep,
 Thee first it fits, oh stranger ! to prepare
 The due libation, and the solemn pray'r :
 Then give thy friend to shed the sacred wine :
 Though much thy younger, and his years like mine, }
 He too, I deem, implores the pow'rs divine : 61 }
 For all mankind alike require their grace,
 All born to want ; a miserable race !

He spake, and to her hand preferr'd the bowl :
 A secret pleasure touch'd Athena's soul, 65
 To see the pref'rence due to sacred age
 Regarded ever by the just and sage.
 Of ocean's king she then implores the grace.
 Oh thou ! whose arms this ample globe embrace,
 Fulfil our wish, and let thy glory shine 70
 On Nestor first, and Nestor's royal line ;
 Next grant the Pylian states their just desires,
 Pleas'd with their hecatomb's ascending fires ;
 Last deign Telemachus and me to bless,
 And crown our voyage with desir'd success. 75

Thus she ; and having paid the rite divine,
 Gave to Ulysses' son the rosy wine.
 Suppliant he pray'd. And now the victims drest
 They draw, divide, and celebrate the feast.
 The banquet done, the narrative old man, 80
 Thus mild, the pleasing conference began.

Now, gentle guests ! the genial banquet o'er,
 It fits to ask ye, what your native shore,
 And whence your race ? on what adventure, say,
 Thus far ye wander through the wat'ry way ? 85
 Relate, if business, or the thirst of gain,
 Engage your journey o'er the pathless main ;
 Where savage pirates seek, through seas unknown,
 The lives of others, vent'rous of their own ?

Urg'd

Urg'd by the precepts by the Goddess giv'n, 90
 And fill'd with confidence infus'd from heav'n,
 The youth, whom Pallas destin'd to be wife
 And fam'd among the sons of men, replies.
 Inquir'st thou, father! from what coast we came?
 (Oh grace and glory of the Grecian name!) 95
 From where high Ithaca o'erlooks the floods,
 Brown with o'er arching shades and pendent woods,
 Us to these shores our filial duty draws,
 A private sorrow, not a public cause.
 My sire I seek, where-e'er the voice of fame 100
 Has told the glories of his noble name,
 The great Ulysses; fam'd from shore to shore,
 For valour much, for hardy suffering more.
 Long time with thee before proud Ilion's wall
 In arms he fought; with thee beheld her fall. 105
 Of all the chiefs, this hero's fate alone
 Has Jove reserv'd, unheard of, and unknown;
 Whether in fields by hostile fury slain,
 Or sunk by tempests in the gulfy main?
 Of this to learn, oppress'd with tender fears, 110
 Lo, at thy knee his suppliant son appears.
 If or thy certain eye, or curious ear,
 Have learn'd his fate, the whole dark story clear:
 And oh! whate'er heav'n destin'd to betide,
 Let neither flatt'ry smooth, nor pity hide. 115
 Prepar'd I stand: he was but born to try
 The lot of man; to suffer, and to die.
 Oh then, if ever through the ten years war
 The wise, the good Ulysses claim'd thy care;
 If e'er he join'd thy council or thy sword, 120
 True in his deed, and constant to his word;
 Far as thy mind through backward time can see,
 Search all thy stores of faithful memory:
 'Tis sacred truth I ask, and ask of thee. }
 To him experienc'd Nestor thus rejoind. 125
 O friend! what sorrows dost thou bring to mind?
 Shall I the long, laborious scene review,
 And open all the wounds of Greece anew?
 What toils by sea! where dark in quest of prey
 Dauntless we rov'd; Achilles led the way: 130

What

What toils by land ! where mix'd in fatal fight
 Such numbers fell, such heroes sunk to night :
 There Ajax great, Achilles there the brave,
 There wise Patroclus, fill an early grave :
 There too my son — ah once my best delight, 135
 Once swift of foot, and terrible in fight,
 In whom stern courage with soft virtue join'd,
 A faultless body, and a blameless mind :
 Antilochus — what more can I relate ?
 How trace the tedious series of our fate ? 140
 Not added years on years my task could close,
 The long historian of my country's woes :
 Back to thy native islands mightst thou sail,
 And leave half-heard the melancholy tale.
 Nine painful years on that detested shore ; 145
 What stratagems we form'd ! what toils we bore !
 Still lab'ring on, till scarce at last we found
 Great Jove propitious, and our conquest crown'd.
 Far o'er the rest thy mighty father shin'd,
 In wit, in prudence, and in force of mind. 150
 Art thou the son of that illustrious sire ?
 With joy I grasp thee, and with love admire.
 So like your voices, and your words so wise,
 Who finds thee younger must consult his eyes.
 Thy sire and I were one ; nor vary'd ought 155
 In public sentence, or in private thought ;
 Alike to council or th' assembly came,
 With equal souls, and sentiments the same.
 But when (by wisdom won) proud Ilion burn'd,
 And in their ships the conqu'ring Greeks return'd ; 160
 'Twas God's high will the victors to divide,
 And turn th' event, confounding human pride :
 Some he destroy'd, some scatter'd as the dust,
 (Not all were prudent, and not all were just).
 Then Discord, sent by Pallas from above, 165
 Stern daughter of the great avenger Jove,
 The brother-kings inspir'd with fell debate ;
 Who call'd to council all th' Achaian state,
 But call'd untimely, (not the sacred rite
 Observ'd, nor heedful of the setting light, 170
 Nor

Nor herald sworn the session to proclaim) ;
 Sour with debauch, a reeling tribe they came.
 To these the cause of meeting they explain,
 And Menelaus moves to cross the main :
 Not so the king of men ; he will'd to stay, 175
 The sacred rites and hecatombs to pay,
 And calm Minerva's wrath. Oh blind to fate !
 The Gods not lightly change their love or hate.
 With ireful taunts each other they oppose,
 Till in loud tumult all the Greeks arose. 180
 Now diff'rent counsels ev'ry breast divide,
 Each burns with rancour to the adverse side :
 Th' unquiet night strange projects entertain'd ;
 (So Jove, that urg'd us to our fate, ordain'd).
 We, with the rising morn our ships unmoor'd, 185
 And brought our captives and our stores aboard ;
 But half the people with respect obey'd
 The king of men, and at his bidding stay'd.
 Now on the wings of winds our course we keep,
 (For God had smooth'd the waters of the deep), 190
 For Tenedos we spread our eager oars,
 There land, and pay due victims to the pow'rs :
 To bless our safe return we join in pray'r,
 But angry Jove dispers'd our vows in air,
 And rais'd new discord. Then (so heav'n decreed) 195
 Ulysses first and Nestor disagreed :
 Wise as he was, by various counsels sway'd,
 He there, though late, to please the monarch, stay'd.
 But I, determin'd, stem the foamy floods,
 Warn'd of the coming fury of the Gods. 200
 With us, Tydides fear'd, and urg'd his haste :
 And Menelaus came, but came the last.
 He join'd our vessels in the Lesbian bay,
 While yet we doubted of our wat'ry way ;
 If to the right to urge the pilot's toil, 205
 (The safer road), beside the Pfyrian isle ;
 Or the straight course to rocky Chios plough,
 And anchor under Mimas' shaggy brow ?
 We sought direction of the pow'r divine :
 The God propitious gave the guiding sign ; 210
 Through

Through the mid seas he bids our navy steer,
 And in Eubœa shun the woes we fear.
 The whistling winds already wak'd the sky ;
 Before the whistling winds the vessels fly,
 With rapid swiftness cut the liquid way, 215
 And reach Gereſtus at the point of day.

There hecatombs of bulls, to Neptune ſlain,
 High flaming pleaſe the monarch of the main.
 The fourth day ſhone, when all their labours o'er
 Tydides' veſſels touch'd the wiſh'd-for ſhore : 220

But I to Pylos ſcud before the gales,
 The God ſtill breathing on my ſwelling ſails ;
 Sep'rate from all, I ſafely landed here ;
 Their fates or fortunes never reach'd my ear.
 Yet what I learn'd, attend ; as here I ſat, 225 }
 And aſk each voyager each hero's fate ;
 Curious to know, and willing to relate.

Safe reach'd the Myrmidons their native land,
 Beneath Achilles' warlike ſon's command.
 Thoſe, whom the heir of great Apollo's art, 230

Brave Philoctetes, taught to wing the dart ;
 And thoſe whom Idomen from Ilion's plain
 Had led, ſecurely croſs'd the dreadful main.
 How Agamemnon touch'd his Argive coaſt,
 And how his life by fraud and force he loſt, 235

And how the murd'rer paid his forfeit breath ;
 What land ſo diſtant from that ſcene of death
 But trembling heard the fame ? and heard, admire
 How well the ſon appeas'd his ſlaughter'd fire !

Ev'n to th' unhappy, that unjuſtly bleed, 240
 Heav'n gives poſterity, t' avenge the dead.

So fell Ægyſthus ; and mayſt thou, my friend,
 (On whom the virtues of thy fire deſcend),
 Make future times thy equal act adore,
 And be what brave Oreſtes was before ! 245

The prudent youth reply'd : O thou the grace
 And laſting glory of the Grecian race !
 Juſt was the vengeance, and to lateſt days
 Shall long poſterity reſound the praiſe.

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Some God this arm with equal prowess blest ! 250
 And the proud suitors shall its force confess :
 Injurious men ! who, while my soul is sore
 Of fresh affronts, are meditating more.
 But heav'n denies this honour to my hand,
 Nor shall my father repossess the land : 255
 The father's fortune never to return,
 And the sad son's to suffer and to mourn !

Thus he ; and Nestor took the word : My son,
 Is it then true, as distant rumours run,
 That crouds of rivals for thy mother's charms 260
 Thy palace fill with insults and alarms ?
 Say, is the fault, through tame submission, thine ?
 Or leagu'd against thee, do thy people join,
 Mov'd by some oracle, or voice divine ? }
 And yet who knows, but ripening lies in fate 265
 An hour of vengeance for th' afflicted state ;
 When great Ulysses shall suppress these harms,
 Ulysses singly, or all Greece in arms.
 But if Athena, war's triumphant maid,
 The happy son, will, as the father, aid, 270
 (Whose fame and safety was her constant care
 In ev'ry danger and in ev'ry war :
 Never on man did heav'nly favour shine
 With rays so strong, distinguish'd and divine,
 As those with which Minerva mark'd thy fire), 275
 So might she love thee, so thy soul inspire !
 Soon should their hopes in humble dust be laid,
 And long oblivion of the bridal bed.

Ah ! no such hope (the prince with sighs replies)
 Can touch my breast ; that blessing heav'n denies. 280
 Ev'n by celestial favour were it giv'n,
 Fortune or fate would cross the will of heav'n.

What words are these, and what imprudence thine ?
 (Thus interpos'd the martial maid divine),
 Forgetful youth ! but know, the pow'r above 285
 With ease can save each object of his love ;
 Wide as his will, extends his boundless grace ;
 Nor lost in time, nor circumscrib'd by place.

Happier

Happier his lot, who many sorrows past,
 Long lab'ring gains his natal shore at last ; 290
 Than who too speedy, hastes to end his life
 By some stern ruffian, or adult'rous wife.
 Death only is the lot which none can miss ;
 And all is possible to heav'n but this.

The best, the dearest fav'rite of the sky 295
 Must taste that cup, for man is born to die.

Thus check'd, reply'd Ulysses' prudent heir :
 Mentor, no more—the mournful thought forbear ;
 For he no more must draw his country's breath,
 Already snatch'd by fate, and the black doom of death !
 Pass we to other subjects ; and engage 301
 Oh themes remote the venerable sage ;

(Who thrice has seen the perithable kind
 Of men decay, and through three ages shin'd,
 Like gods majestic, and like gods in mind.) 305 }

For much he knows, and just conclusions draws
 From various precedents, and various laws.

O son of Neleus ! awful Nestor, tell
 How he, the mighty Agamemnon fell ?
 By what strange fraud Ægythus wrought, relate, 310
 (By force he could not), such a hero's fate ?
 Liv'd Menelaus not in Greece ? or where
 Was then the martial brother's pious care ?
 Condemn'd perhaps some foreign shore to tread ;
 Or sure Ægythus had not dar'd the deed. 315

To whom the full of days : Illustrious youth,
 Attend (though partly thou hast guess'd) the truth.
 For had the martial Menelaus found
 The ruffian breathing yet on Argive ground ;
 Nor earth had hid his carcase from the skies, 320
 Nor Grecian virgins shriek'd his obsequies ;
 But fowls obscene dismember'd his remains,
 And dogs had torn him on the naked plains.
 While us the works of bloody Mars employ'd,
 The wanton youth inglorious peace enjoy'd ; 325
 He, stretch'd at ease in Argos' calm recess,
 (Whose stately steeds luxuriant pastures bless),

With flattery's insinuating art
 Sooth'd the frail queen, and poison'd all her heart.
 At first with worthy shame and decent pride, 330
 The royal dame his lawless suit deny'd.
 For virtue's image yet possess'd her mind,
 Taught by a master of the tuneful kind:
 Atrides, parting for the Trojan war,
 Consign'd the youthful consort to his care. 335
 True to his charge, the bard preserv'd her long
 In honour's limits; such the power of song.
 But when the Gods these objects of their hate
 Dragg'd to destruction, by the links of fate;
 The bard they banish'd from his native soil, 340
 And left all helpless in a desert isle:
 There he, the sweetest of the sacred train,
 Sung dying to the rocks, but sung in vain.
 Then virtue was no more; her guard away,
 She fell, to lust a voluntary prey. 345
 Ev'n to the temple stalk'd th' adult'rous spouse,
 With impious thanks, and mockery of vows,
 With images, with garments, and with gold;
 And od'rous fumes from loaded altars roll'd.
 Meantime from flaming Troy we cut the way, 350
 With Menelaus, through the curling sea.
 But when to Sunium's sacred point we came,
 Crown'd with the temple of th' Athenian dame;
 Atrides' pilot, Phrontes, there expir'd;
 (Phrontes, of all the sons of men admir'd 355
 To steer the bounding bark with steady toil,
 When the storm thickens, and the billows boil);
 While yet he exercis'd the steerman's art,
 Apollo touch'd him with his gentle dart;
 Ev'n with the rudder in his hand, he fell. 360
 To pay whose honours to the shades of hell,
 We check'd our haste, by pious office bound,
 And laid our old companion in the ground.
 And now the rites discharg'd, our course we keep
 Far on the gloomy bosom of the deep: 365
 Soon as Malæa's misty tops arise,
 Sudden the Thund'rer blackens all the skies,

And

And the winds whistle, and the surges roll
 Mountains on mountains, and obscure the pole.
 The tempest scatters, and divides our fleet ; 370
 Part, the storm urges on the coast of Crete,
 Where winding round the rich Cydonian plain,
 The streams of Jardan issue to the main.
 There stands a rock, high, eminent, and steep,
 Whose shaggy brow o'erhangs the shady deep, 375
 And views Gortyna on the western side ;
 On this rough Auster drove th' impetuous tide :
 With broken force the billows roll'd away,
 And heav'd the fleet into the neighb'ring bay.
 Thus sav'd from death, they gain'd the Phæstian shores,
 With shatter'd vessels, and disabled oars : 380
 But five tall barks the winds and waters tost,
 Far from their fellows, on th' Ægyptian coast.
 There wander'd Menelaus through foreign shores,
 Amassing gold, and gath'ring naval stores ; 385
 While curs'd Ægylthus the detested deed
 By fraud fulfill'd, and his great brother bled.
 Sev'n years the traitor rich Mycenæ sway'd,
 And his stern rule the groaning land obey'd ;
 The eighth, from Athens to his realm restor'd, 390
 Orestes brandish'd the revenging sword,
 Slew the dire pair, and gave to fun'ral flame
 The vile assassin, and adult'rous dame.
 That day, ere yet the bloody triumphs cease,
 Return'd Atrides to the coast of Greece, 395
 And safe to Argos' port his navy brought,
 With gifts of price and pond'rous treasure fraught.
 Hence warn'd, my son, beware ! nor idly stand
 Too long a stranger to thy native land ;
 Lest heedless absence wear thy wealth away, 400
 While lawless feasters in thy palace sway ;
 Perhaps may seize thy realm, and share the spoil ; }
 And thou return, with disappointed toil, }
 From thy vain journey, to a rifled isle. }
 Howe'er, my friend, indulge one labour more, 405
 And seek Atrides on the Spartan shore.

He, wand'ring long, a wider circle made,
 And many-languag'd nations has survey'd ;
 And measur'd tracts unknown to other ships,
 Amid the monstrous wonders of the deeps ; 410
 (A length of ocean and unbounded sky,
 Which scarce the sea-fowl in a year o'erfly).

Go then ; to Sparta take the wat'ry way,
 Thy ship and sailors but for orders stay ;
 Or if by land thou chuse thy course to bend, 415
 My steeds, my chariots, and my sons attend :
 Thee to Atrides they shall safe convey,
 Guides of thy road, companions of thy way.
 Urge him with truth to frame his free replies,
 And sure he will : for Menelaus is wife. 420

Thus while he speaks, the ruddy sun descends,
 And twilight grey her ev'ning-shade extends.
 Then thus the blue-ey'd maid : O full of days !
 Wise are thy words, and just are all thy ways.
 Now immolate the tongues, and mix the wine, 425
 Sacred to Neptune and the pow'rs divine.
 The lamp of day is quench'd beneath the deep,
 And soft approach the balmy hours of sleep :
 Nor fits it to prolong the heav'nly feast,
 Timeless, indecent, but retire to rest. 430

So spake Jove's daughter, the celestial maid.
 The sober train attended and obey'd.
 The sacred heralds on their hands around
 Pour'd the full urns ; the youths the goblets crown'd :
 From bowl to bowl the holy bev'rage flows ; 435
 While to the final sacrifice they rose.

The tongues they cast upon the fragrant flame,
 And pour, above, the consecrated stream.
 And now, their thirst by copious draughts allay'd,
 The youthful hero and th' Athenian maid 440

Propose departure from the finish'd rite,
 And in their hollow bark to pass the night :
 But this the hospitable sage deny'd.
 Forbid it, Jove ! and all the gods ! he cry'd,
 Thus from my walls the much-lov'd son to send 445
 Of such a hero, and of such a friend !

Me,

Me, as some needy peasant, would ye leave,
 Whom heav'n denies the blessing to relieve ?
 Me would you leave, who boast imperial sway,
 When beds of royal state invite your stay ? 450
 No — long as life this mortal shall inspire,
 Or as my children imitate their fire,
 Here shall the wand'ring stranger find his home,
 And hospitable rites adorn the dome.

Well hast thou spoke, (the blue-ey'd maid replies),
 Eslov'd old man ! benevolent, as wife. 456
 Be the kind dictates of thy heart obey'd,
 And let thy words Telemachus persuade :
 He to thy palace shall thy steps pursue ;
 I to the ship, to give the orders due, 460
 Prescribe directions, and confirm the crew.
 For I alone sustain their naval cares,
 Who boast experience from these silver hairs ;
 All youths the rest, whom to this journey move
 Like years, like tempers, and their prince's love. 465
 There in the vessel shall I pass the night ;
 And soon as morning paints the fields of light,
 I go to challenge from the Caucons bold,
 A debt, contracted in the days of old.
 But this thy guest, receiv'd with friendly care, 470
 Let thy strong coursers swift to Sparta bear ;
 Prepare thy chariot at the dawn of day,
 And be thy son companion of his way.

Then turning with the word, Minerva flies,
 And soars an eagle through the liquid skies. 475
 Vision divine ! the throng'd spectators gaze
 In holy wonder fix'd, and still amaze.

But chief the rev'rend sage admir'd ; he took
 The hand of young Telemachus, and spoke :

O happy youth ! and favour'd of the skies, 480
 Distinguish'd care of guardian deities !
 Whose early years for future worth engage,
 No vulgar manhood, no ignoble age.
 For lo ! none other of the court above
 Than she, the daughter of almighty Jove, 485
 Pallas

Pallas herself, the war-triumphant maid,
 Confess'd is thine, as once thy father's aid.
 So guide me, Goddess! so propitious shine
 On me, my consort, and my royal line!
 A yearling bullock to thy name shall smoke,
 Untam'd, unconscious of the galling yoke,
 With ample forehead, and yet tender horns,
 Whose budding honours ductile gold adorns.

490

Submissive thus the hoary sire preferr'd
 His holy vow: the fav'ring Goddess heard.
 Then slowly rising, o'er the sandy space
 Precedes the father, follow'd by his race,
 (A long procession), timely marching home
 In comely order to the regal dome.

495

There when arriv'd, on thrones around him plac'd, 500
 His sons and grandsons the wide circle grac'd.

To these the hospitable sage, in sign
 Of social welcome, mix'd the racy wine,
 (Late from the mellowing casks restor'd to light,
 By ten long years refin'd, and rosy-bright).

505

To Pallas high the foaming bowl he crown'd,
 And sprinkled large libations on the ground.

Each drinks a full oblivion of his cares,
 And to the gifts of balmy sleep repairs.

Deep in a rich alcove the prince was laid,
 And slept beneath the pompous colonnade;

510

Fast by his side Pisistratus lay spread,
 (In age his equal), on a splendid bed:

But in an inner court, securely clos'd,
 The rev'rend Nestor and his queen repos'd.

515

When now Aurora, daughter of the dawn,
 With rosy lustre purpled o'er the lawn;

The old man early rose, walk'd forth, and sat
 On polish'd stone before his palace-gate:

With unguents smooth the lucid marble shone,
 Where ancient Neleus sat, a rustic throne;

520

But he descending to th' infernal shade,
 Sage Nestor fill'd it, and the sceptre sway'd.

His sons around him mild obeisance pay,
 And duteous take the orders of the day.

525
First

First Echephron and Stratius quit their bed ;
 Then Perseus, Aretus, and Thrasymed ;
 The last Pisistratus arose from rest :
 They came, and near him plac'd the stranger-guest.
 To these the senior thus declar'd his will : 530
 My sons ! the dictates of your sire fulfil.
 To Pallas, first of Gods, prepare the feast,
 Who grac'd our rites, a more than mortal guest.
 Let one, dispatchful, bid some swain to lead
 A well-fed bullock from the grassy mead ; 535
 One seek the harbour where the vessels moor,
 And bring thy friends, Telemachus ! ashore,
 (Leave only two the galley to attend) ;
 Another to Laerceus must we send,
 Artist divine, whose skilful hands infold 540
 The victim's horn with circumfusile gold.
 The rest may here the pious duty share,
 And bid the handmaids for the feast prepare,
 The seats to range, the fragrant wood to bring,
 And limpid waters from the living spring. 545
 He said, and busy each his care bestow'd ;
 Already at the gates the bullock low'd,
 Already came the Ithacensian crew,
 The dext'rous smith the tools already drew :
 His pond'rous hammer, and his anvil sound, 550
 And the strong tongs to turn the metal round.
 Nor was Minerva absent from the rite,
 She view'd her honours, and enjoy'd the sight.
 With rev'rend hand the king presents the gold,
 Which round th' intort horns the gilder roll'd ;
 So wrought, as Pallas might with pride behold. 556
 Young Aretus from forth his bridal bow'r
 Brought the full laver, o'er their hands to pour,
 And canisters of consecrated flour.
 Stratius and Echephron the victim led ; 560
 The axe was held by warlike Thrasymed,
 In act to strike : before him Perseus stood,
 The vase extending to receive the blood.
 The king himself initiates to the pow'r ;
 Scatters with quiv'ring hand the sacred flour, 565
 And

And the stream sprinkles : from the curling brows
 The hair collected in the fire he throws.
 Soon as due vows on ev'ry part were paid,
 And sacred wheat upon the victim laid,
 Strong Thrasymed discharg'd the speeding blow 570
 Full on his neck, and cut the nerves in two.
 Down sunk the heavy beast : the females round,
 Maids, wives, and matrons, mix a strilling sound.
 Nor scorn'd the queen the holy choir to join,
 (The first-born she of old Clymenus' line ; 575
 In youth by Nestor lov'd, of spotless fame,
 And lov'd in age, Eurydice her name).
 From earth they rear him, struggling now with death ;
 And Nestor's youngest stops the vents of breath.
 The soul for ever flies : on all sides round 580
 Streams the black blood, and smokes upon the ground.
 The beast they then divide, and disunite
 The ribs and limbs, observant of the rite :
 On these, in double cawls involv'd with art,
 The choicest morsels lay from ev'ry part. 585
 The sacred sage before his altar stands,
 Turns the burnt-off 'ring with his holy hands,
 And pours the wine, and bids the flames aspire :
 The youth with instruments surround the fire.
 The thighs now sacrific'd, and entrails drest, 590
 Th' assistants part, transfix, and broil the rest.
 While these officious tend the rites divine,
 The last fair branch of the Nestorean line,
 Sweet Polyaste, took the pleasing toil
 To bathe the prince, and pour the fragrant oil. 595
 O'er his fair limbs a flow'ry vest he threw,
 And issu'd, like a God, to mortal view.
 His former feat beside the king he found,
 (His people's father with his peers around).
 All plac'd at ease, the holy banquet join, 600
 And in the dazzling goblet laughs the wine.
 The rage of thirst and hunger now suppress,
 The monarch turns him to his royal guest ;
 And for the promis'd journey bids prepare
 The smooth-hair'd horses, and the rapid car. 605

Observant of his word ; the word scarce spoke,
 The sons obey, and join them to the yoke.
 Then bread and wine a ready handmaid brings,
 And presents, such as suit the state of kings.

The glitt'ring seat Telemachus ascends ;

610

His faithful guide Pisistratus attends :

With hasty hand the ruling reins he drew :

He lash'd the coursers, and the coursers flew.

Beneath the bounding yoke alike they held

Their equal pace, and smok'd along the field.

615

The tow'rs of Pylos sink, its views decay,

Fields after fields fly back, till close of day ;

Then sunk the sun, and darken'd all the way.

}

To Pheræ now, Diocleus' stately seat,

(Of Alpheus' race), the weary youths retreat.

620

His house affords the hospitable rite,

And pleas'd they sleep (the blessing of the night).

But when Aurora, daughter of the dawn,

With rosy lustre purpled o'er the lawn ;

Again they mount, their journey to renew,

625

And from the sounding portico they flew.

Along the waving fields their way they hold,

The fields receding as the chariot roll'd :

Then slowly sunk the ruddy globe of light,

And o'er the shaded landscape rush'd the night.

630

T H E

T H E
O D Y S S E Y.
B O O K IV.

T H E A R G U M E N T.

The conference with Menelaus.

Telemachus, with Pisistratus, arriving at Sparta, is hospitably received by Menelaus, to whom he relates the cause of his coming, and learns from him many particulars of what befel the Greeks since the destruction of Troy. He dwells more at large upon the prophecies of Proteus to him in his return, from which he acquaints Telemachus, that Ulysses is detained in the island of Calypso.

In the mean time, the suitors consult to destroy Telemachus in his voyage home. Penelope is apprised of this, but comforted in a dream by Pallas, in the shape of her sister Iphthima.

AND now proud Sparta with their wheels resounds,
Sparta whose walls a range of hills surrounds :
At the fair dome the rapid labour ends ;
Where sat Atrides 'midst his bridal friends,
With double vows invoking Hymen's pow'r,
To bless his sons and daughters nuptial hour.
That day, to great Achilles' son resign'd,
Hermione, the fairest of her kind,
Was sent to crown the long protracted joy,
Espous'd before the final doom of Troy :
With steeds and gilded cars, a gorgeous train
Attend the nymph to Phthia's distant reign.

Meanwhile

Book IV. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 49

Meanwhile at home, to Megapenthes' bed
 The virgin choir Alector's daughter led.
 Brave Megapenthes, from a stol'n amour 15
 To great Atrides' age his handmaid bore :
 To Helen's bed the Gods alone assign
 Hermione, t' extend the regal line ;
 On whom a radiant pomp of graces wait,
 Resembling Venus in attractive state. 20

While this gay friendly troop the king surround,
 With festival and mirth the roofs resound :
 A bard amid the joyous circle sings
 High airs, attemper'd to the vocal strings ;
 Whilst warbling to the varied strain, advance 25
 Two sprightly youths, to form the bounding dance.
 'Twas then, that issuing through the palace gate
 The splendid car roll'd slow in regal state :
 On the bright eminence young Nestor shone,
 And fast beside him great Ulysses' son : 30
 Grave Eteoneus saw the pomp appear,
 And speeding, thus address'd the royal ear.

Two youths approach, whose semblant features prove
 Their blood devolving from the source of Jove.
 Is due reception deign'd ? or must they bend 35
 Their doubtful course to seek a distant friend ?

Insensate ! (with a sigh the king replies),
 Too long, misjudging, have I thought thee wise :
 But sure relentless folly steels thy breast,
 Obdurate to reject the stranger guest ; 40
 To those dear hospitable rites a foe,
 Which in my wand'rings oft reliev'd my wo :
 Fed by the bounty of another's board,
 Till pitying Jove my native realm restor'd. —
 Straight be the coursers from the car releas'd, 45
 Conduct the youths to grace the genial feast.

The seneschal rebuk'd, in haste withdrew ;
 With equal haste a menial train pursue :
 Part led the coursers, from the car enlarg'd,
 Each to a crib with choicest grain surcharg'd ; 50
 Part in a portico, profusely grac'd
 With rich magnificence, the chariot plac'd :

† E

Then

Then to the dome the friendly pair invite,
 Who eye the dazzling roofs with vast delight ;
 Resplendent as the blaze of summer-noon, 55
 Or the pale radiance of the midnight-moon.

From room to room their eager view they bend ;
 Thence to the bath, a beauteous pile, descend ;
 Where a bright damsel-train attend the guests
 With liquid odours, and embroider'd vests. 60

Refresh'd, they wait them to the bow'r of state,
 Where circled with his peers Atrides sat :
 Thron'd next the king, a fair attendant brings
 The purest product of the crystal springs ;
 High on a massy vase of silver mold, 65

The burnish'd laver flames with solid gold :
 In solid gold the purple vintage flows,
 And on the board a second banquet rose.

When thus the king, with hospitable port : —
 Accept this welcome to the Spartan court ; 70

The waste of nature let the feast repair,
 Then your high lineage and your names declare :
 Say from what sceptred ancestry ye claim,
 Recorded eminent in deathless fame ?

For vulgar parents cannot stamp their race
 With signatures of such majestic grace. 75

Ceasing, benevolent he straight assigns
 The royal portion of the choicest chimes
 To each accepted friend : with grateful haste
 They share the honours of the rich repast. 80
 Suffic'd, soft-whispering thus to Nestor's son,
 His head reclin'd, young Ithacus begun.

View'st thou unmov'd, O ever honour'd most !
 These prodigies of art, and wondrous cost !
 Above, beneath, around the palace shines 85
 The sumless treasure of exhausted mines :
 The spoils of elephants the roofs inlay,
 And studded amber darts a golden ray :
 Such, and not nobler, in the realms above
 My wonder dictates is the dome of Jove. 90

The monarch took the word, and grave reply'd.
 Presumptuous are the vaunts, and vain the pride

Book IV. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 51

Of man, who dares in pomp with Jove contest,
 Unchang'd, immortal, and supremely blest !
 With all my affluence when my woes are weigh'd, 95
 Envy will own the purchase dearly paid.
 For eight slow circling years by tempests tost,
 From Cyprus to the far Phœnician coast,
 (Sidon the capital), I stretch'd my toil
 Through regions fatten'd with the flows of Nile. 100
 Next, Æthiopa's utmost bound explore,
 And the parch'd borders of th' Arabian shore :
 Then warp my voyage on the southern gales,
 O'er the warm Lybian wave to spread my sails :
 That happy clime ! where each revolving year 105
 The teeming ewes a triple offspring bear ;
 And two fair crescents of translucent horn
 The brows of all their young increase adorn :
 The shepherd swains, with sure abundance blest,
 On the fat flock and rural dainties feast ; 110
 Nor want of herbage makes the dairy fail,
 But ev'ry season fills the foaming pail.
 Whilst heaping unwish'd wealth, I distant roam ;
 The best of brothers, at his natal home,
 By the dire fury of a traitress wife, 115
 Ends the sad evening of a stormy life :
 Whence with incessant grief my soul annoy'd,
 These riches are possess'd, but not enjoy'd !
 My wars, the copious theme of ev'ry tongue,
 To you, your fathers have recorded long : 120
 How fav'ring heav'n repaid my glorious toils
 With a sack'd palace, and barbaric spoils.
 Oh ! had the Gods so large a boon deny'd,
 And life, the just equivalent, supply'd
 To those brave warriors, who with glory fir'd, 125
 Far from their country in my cause expir'd !
 Still in short intervals of pleasing wo,
 Regardful of the friendly dues I owe,
 I to the glorious dead, for ever dear !
 Indulge the tribute of a grateful tear. 130
 But oh ! Ulysses — deeper than the rest,
 That sad idea wounds my anxious breast !

My heart bleeds fresh with agonizing pain ;
 The bowl and tasteful viands tempt in vain,
 Nor sleep's soft pow'r can close my streaming eyes, 135
 When imag'd to my soul his sorrows rise.

No peril in my cause he ceas'd to prove,
 His labours equall'd only by my love :
 And both alike to bitter fortune born,
 For him to suffer, and for me to mourn ! 140

Whether he wanders on some friendly coast,
 Or glides in Stygian gloom a pensive ghost,
 No fame reveals ; but doubtful of his doom,
 His good old sire with sorrow to the tomb
 Declines his trembling steps ; untimely care 145
 Withers the blooming vigour of his heir ;
 And the chaste partner of his bed and throne,
 Wastes all her widow'd hours in tender moan.

While thus pathetic to the prince he spoke,
 From the brave youth the streaming passion broke : 150
 Studious to veil the grief, in vain repress,
 His face he shrouded with his purple vest :
 The conscious monarch pierc'd the coy disguise,
 And view'd his filial love with vast surprise :
 Dubious to press the tender theme, or wait 155
 To hear the youth inquire his father's fate.

In this suspense bright Helen grac'd the room ;
 Before her breath'd a gale of rich perfume.
 So moves, adorn'd with each attractive grace,
 'The silver-shafted Goddess of the chace ! 160

'The seat of majesty Adrafte brings,
 With art illustrious, for the pomp of kings.
 To spread the pall (beneath the regal chair)
 Of softest woof, is bright Alcippe's care.
 A silver canister divinely wrought, 165

In her soft hands the beauteous Phylo brought :
 'To Sparta's queen of old the radiant vase
 Alcandra gave, a pledge of royal grace :
 For Polybus her lord, (whose sov'reign sway
 The wealthy tribes of Pharian Thebes obey), 170
 When to that court Atides came, carest
 With vast munificence th' imperial guest :

Two lavers from the richest ore refin'd,
With silver tripods, the kind host assign'd ;
And bounteous, from the royal treasure told 175
Ten equal talents of refulgent gold.

Alcandra, consort of his high command,
A golden distaff gave to Helen's hand ;
And that rich vase, with living sculpture wrought,
Which heap'd with wool the beauteous Phylo brought :
The silken fleece impurpled for the loom, 181
Rival'd the hyacinth in vernal bloom.

The sovereign seat then Jove-born Helen press'd,
And pleasing thus her scepter'd lord address'd.

Who grace our palace now, that friendly pair, 185
Speak they their lineage, or their names declare ?
Uncertain of the truth, yet uncontroll'd
Hear me the bodings of my breast unfold.

With wonder rapt, on yonder cheek I trace
The feature of the Ulyssæan race : 190
Diffus'd o'er each resembling line appear,
In just similitude, the grace and air
Of young Telemachus ! the lovely boy,
Who bless'd Ulysses with a father's joy,
What time the Greeks combin'd their social arms, 195
T' avenge the stain of my ill-fated charms !

Just is thy thought, the king assenting cries,
Methinks Ulysses strikes my wond'ring eyes :
Full shines the father in the filial frame,
His port, his features, and his shape the same ; 200
Such quick regards his sparkling eyes bestow ;
Such wavy ringlets o'er his shoulders flow !
And when he heard the long disastrous store
Of cares, which in my cause Ulysses bore ;
Dismay'd, heart-wounded with paternal woes, 205
Above restraint the tide of sorrow rose :
Cautious to let the gushing grief appear,
His purple garment veil'd the falling tear.

See there confest, Pisistratus replies,
The genuine worth of Ithacus the wise ! 210
Of that heroic sire the youth is sprung,
But modest awe hath chain'd his tim'rous tongue.

Thy voice, O king ! with pleas'd attention heard,
 Is like the dictates of a God rever'd.
 With him at Nestor's high command I came, 215
 Whose age I honour with a parent's name.
 By adverse destiny constrain'd to sue
 For counsel and redress, he sues to you.
 Whatever ill the friendless orphan bears,
 Bereav'd of parents in his infant years, 220
 Still must the wrong'd Telemachus sustain,
 If hopeful of your aid, he hopes in vain :
 Affianc'd in your friendly pow'r alone,
 The youth would vindicate the vacant throne.
 Is Sparta blest'd, and these desiring eyes 225
 View my friend's son ? (the king exulting cries),
 Son of my friend, by glorious toils approv'd,
 Whose sword was sacred to the man he lov'd ;
 Mirror of constant faith, rever'd, and mourn'd ! —
 When Troy was ruin'd, had the chief return'd, 230
 No Greek an equal space had e'er possess'd,
 Of dear affection, in my grateful breast.
 I, to confirm the mutual joys we shar'd,
 For his abode a capital prepar'd ;
 Argos the seat of sovereign rule I chose ; 235
 Fair in the plan the future palace rose,
 Where my Ulysses and his race might reign,
 And portion to his tribes the wide domain.
 To them my vassals had resign'd a soil,
 With teeming plenty to reward their toil. 240
 There with commutual zeal we both had strove
 In acts of dear benevolence, and love :
 Brothers in peace, not rivals in command ;
 And death alone dissolv'd the friendly band !
 Some envious pow'r the blissful scene destroys ; 245
 Vanish'd are all the visionary joys :
 The soul of friendship to my hope is lost,
 Fated to wander from his natal coast !
 He ceas'd ; a gust of grief began to rise :
 Fast streams a tide from beauteous Helen's eyes ; 250
 Fast for the sire the filial sorrows flow ;
 The weeping monarch swells the mighty wo :

Thy

Thy cheeks, Pisistratus, the tears bedew,
While pictur'd to thy mind appear'd in view
Thy martial brother *, on the Phrygian plain 255
Extended pale, by swarthy Memnon slain !
But silence soon the son of Nestor broke,
And melting with fraternal pity spoke.

Frequent, O king, was Nestor wont to raise
And charm attention with thy copious praise : 260
To crown thy various gifts, the sage assign'd
The glory of a firm capacious mind :
With that superior attribute controul
This unavailing impotence of soul.

Let not your roof with echoing grief resound, 265
Now for the feast the friendly bowl is crown'd :
But when from dewy shade emerging bright,
Aurora streaks the sky with orient light,
Let each deplore his dead : the rites of wo
Are all, alas ! the living can bestow : 270

O'er the congenial dust injoin'd to shear
The graceful curl, and drop the tender tear.
Then mingling in the mournful pomp with you,
I'll pay my brother's ghost a warrior's due,
And mourn the brave Antilochus, a name 275
Not unrecorded in the rolls of fame :

With strength and speed superior form'd, in fight
To face the foe, or intercept his flight :
Too early snatch'd by fate, ere known to me !
I boast a witness of his worth in thee. 280

Young and mature ! the monarch thus rejoins,
In thee renew'd the soul of Nestor shines :
Form'd by the care of that consummate sage,
In early bloom an oracle of age.

Whene'er his influence Jove vouchsafes to show'r 285
To bless the natal and the nuptial hour ;
From the great fire transmissive to the race,
The boon devolving gives distinguish'd grace.
Such, happy Nestor ! was thy glorious doom ;
Around thee full of years, thy offspring bloom, 290

* Antilochus.

Expert of arms, and prudent in debate ;
 The gifts of heaven to guard thy hoary state.
 But now let each becalm his troubled breast,
 Wash, and partake serene the friendly feast.
 To move thy suit, Telemachus, delay, 295
 Till heav'n's revolving lamp restores the day.

He said : Asphalion swift the laver brings ;
 Alternate all partake the grateful springs :
 Then from the rites of purity repair,
 And with keen gust the sav'ry viands share. 300
 Meantime with genial joy to warm the soul,
 Bright Helen mix'd a mirth-inspiring bowl ;
 Temper'd with drugs of sov'reign use, t' assuage
 The boiling bosom of tumultuous rage ;
 To clear the cloudy front of wrinkled Care, 305
 And dry the tearful fluices of Despair :
 Charm'd with that virtuous draught, th' exalted mind
 All sense of wo delivers to the wind.

Though on the blazing pile his parent lay,
 Or a lov'd brother groan'd his life away, 310
 Or darling son, oppress'd by ruffian-force,
 Fell breathless at his feet, a mangled corse ;
 From morn to eve, impassive and serene,
 The man entranc'd would view the deathful scene.
 These drugs, so friendly to the joys of life, 315
 Bright Helen learn'd from Thone's imperial wife ;
 Who sway'd the sceptre, where prolific Nile
 With various simples clothes the fatten'd soil.
 With wholesome herbage mix'd, the direful bane
 Of vegetable venom, taints the plain ; 320
 From Pæon sprung, their patron-god imparts
 To all the Pharian race his healing arts.
 The bev'rage now prepar'd t' inspire the feast,
 The circle thus the beauteous queen address'd.

Thron'd in omnipotence, supremest Jove 325
 Tempers the fates of human race above ;
 By the firm sanction of his sov'reign will,
 Alternate are decreed our good and ill.
 To feastful mirth be this white hour assign'd,
 And sweet discourse, the banquet of the mind. 330

Myself

Myself assisting in the social joy,
Will tell Ulysses' bold exploit in Troy :
Sole witness of the deed I now declare ;
Speak you (who saw) his wonders in the war.

Seam'd o'er with wounds, which his own sabre gave,
In the vile habit of a village-slave, 336
The foe deceiv'd, he pass'd the tented plain,
In Troy to mingle with the hostile train.

In this attire secure from searching eyes,
Till haply piercing through the dark disguise 340

The chief I challeng'd ; he, whose practis'd wit
Knew all the serpent-mazes of deceit,

Eludes my search : but when his form I view'd,
Fresh from the bath with fragrant oils renew'd,

His limbs in military purple dress'd ; 345
Each bright'ning grace the genuine Greek confess'd.

A previous pledge of sacred faith obtain'd,
Till he the lines and Argive fleet regain'd,

To keep his stay conceal'd ; the chief declar'd
The plans of war against the town prepar'd. 350

Exploring then the secrets of the state,
He learn'd what best might urge the Dardan fate :

And safe returning to the Grecian host,
Sent many a shade to Pluto's dreary coast.

Loud grief resounded through the row'rs of Troy, 355
But my pleas'd bosom glow'd with secret joy :

For then with dire remorse, and conscious shame,
I view'd th' effects of that disastrous flame,

Which kindled by th' imperious queen of love,
Constrain'd me from my native realm to rove : 360

And oft in bitterness of soul deplor'd
My absent daughter, and my dearer lord ;

Admir'd among the first of human race,
For ev'ry gift of mind, and manly grace.

Right well, reply'd the king, your speech displays
The matchless merit of the chief you praise : 366

Heroes in various climes myself have found,
For martial deeds, and depth of thought renown'd ;

But Ithacus, unrival'd in his claim,
May boast a title to the loudest fame : 370

In

In battle calm, he guides the rapid storm,
 Wise to resolve, and patient to perform.
 What wondrous conduct in the chief appear'd,
 When the vast fabric of the steed we rear'd !
 Some dæmon anxious for the Trojan doom, 375
 Urg'd you with great Deiphobus to come,
 T' explore the fraud ; with guile oppos'd to guile,
 Slow pacing thrice around th' insidious pile ;
 Each noted leader's name you thrice invoke,
 Your accent varying as their spouses spoke : 380
 The pleasing sounds each latent warrior warm'd,
 But most Tydides and my heart alarm'd :
 To quit the steed we both impatient press,
 Threat'ning to answer from the dark recess.
 Unmov'd the mind of Ithacus remain'd, 385
 And the vain ardours of our love restrain'd :
 But Anticlus unable to controul,
 Spoke loud the language of his yerning soul.
 Ulysses straight with indignation fir'd,
 (For so the common care of Greece requir'd), 390
 Firm to his lips his forceful hand apply'd,
 Till on his tongue the fluttering murmurs dy'd.
 Meantime Minerva from the fraudulent horse,
 Back to the court of Priam bent your course.
 Inclement fate ! Telemachus replies, 395
 Frail is the boasted attribute of wise :
 The leader, mingling with the vulgar host,
 Is in the common mass of matter lost !
 But now let sleep the painful waste repair
 Of sad reflection, and corroding care. 400
 He ceas'd ; the menial fare that round her wait,
 At Helen's beck prepare the room of state :
 Beneath an ample portico, they spread
 The downy fleece to form the slumb'rous bed ;
 And o'er soft palls of purple grain, unfold 405
 Rich tapestry, stiff with inwoven gold :
 Then through th' illumin'd dome, to balmy rest
 Th' obsequious herald guides each princely guest :
 While to his regal bow'r the king ascends,
 And beauteous Helen on her lord attends. 410
 Soon

Soon as the morn, in orient purple drest,
 Unbarr'd the portal of the roseate east,
 The monarch rose; magnificent to view,
 Th' imperial mantle o'er his vest he threw;
 The glitt'ring zone athwart his shoulder cast, 415
 A starry fauchion low depending grac'd;
 Clasp'd on his feet th' embroider'd sandals shine,
 And forth he moves, majestic and divine:
 Instant to young Telemachus he press'd,
 And thus benevolent his speech address'd. 420

Say, royal youth, sincere of soul, report
 What cause hath led you to the Spartan court?
 Do public or domestic cares constrain
 This toilsome voyage o'er the surgy main?

O highly-favour'd delegate of Jove! 425
 (Replies the prince), inflam'd with filial love,
 And anxious hope, to hear my parent's doom,
 A suppliant to your royal court I come.

Our sov'reign feat a lewd usurping race
 With lawless riot and misrule disgrace; 430
 To pamper'd insolence devoted fall

Prime of the flock, and choicest of the stall:
 For wild ambition wings their bold desire,
 And all to mount th' imperial bed aspire.

But prostrate, I implore, oh king! relate 435
 The mournful series of my father's fate:
 Each known disaster of the man disclose,

Born by his mother to a world of woes!
 Recite them! nor in erring pity fear
 To wound with storied grief the filial ear: 440

If e'er Ulysses, to reclaim your right,
 Avow'd his zeal in council or in fight,
 If Phrygian camps the friendly toils attest,

To the sire's merit give the son's request. 445
 Deep from his inmost soul Atrides sigh'd,
 And thus indignant to the prince reply'd:

Heaven's! would a soft, inglorious, dastard train
 An absent hero's nuptial joys profane!
 So with her young, amid the woodland shades,

A tim'rous hind the lion's court invades, 450
 Leaves

Leaves in the fatal lair the tender fawns,
 Climbs the green cliff, or feeds the flow'ry lawns :
 Meantime return'd, with dire remorseless sway
 The monarch savage rends the trembling prey.
 With equal fury, and with equal fame, 455
 Ulysses soon shall reassert his claim.

O Jove, supreme, whom Gods and men revere !
 And thou *, to whom 'tis giv'n to gild the sphere !
 With pow'r congenial join'd, propitious aid
 The chief adopted by the martial maid ! 460

Such to our wish the warrior soon restore,
 As when contending on the Lesbian shore
 His prowess Philomelides confess'd,
 And loud-acclaiming Greeks the victor bless'd :
 Then soon th' invaders of his bed and throne, 465
 Their love presumptuous shall with life atone.
 With patient ear, oh royal youth, attend
 The storied labours of thy father's friend :
 Fruitful of deeds, the copious tale is long,
 But truth severe shall dictate to my tongue : 470
 Learn what I heard the sea-born seer relate,
 Whose eye can pierce the dark recess of fate.

Long on th' Ægyptian coast by calms confin'd,
 Heav'n to my fleet refus'd a prosp'rous wind :
 No vows had we preferr'd, nor victim slain ! 475
 For this the Gods each fav'ring gale restrain :
 Jealous to see their high behests obey'd.
 Severe, if men th' eternal rights evade !
 High o'er a gulfy sea, the Pharian isle
 Fronts the deep roar of disemboguing Nile : 480
 Her distance from the shore, the course begun
 At dawn, and ending with the setting sun,
 A galley measures ; when the stiffer gales
 Rise on the poop, and fully stretch the sails.
 There, anchor'd vessels safe in harbour lie, 485
 Whilst limpid springs the failing cask supply.

And now the twentieth sun descending, laves
 His glowing axle in the western waves ;

* Apollo,

Still with expanded sails we court in vain
 Propitious winds, to waft us o'er the main : 490
 And the pale mariner at once deplores
 His drooping vigour, and exhausted stores.
 When lo ! a bright cerulean form appears,
 The fair Eidothea ! to dispel my fears ;
 Proteus her sire divine. With pity press'd, 495
 Me sole the daughter of the deep address'd ;
 What time, with hunger pin'd, my absent mates
 Roam the wild isle in search of rural cates,
 Bait the barb'd steel, and from the fishy flood
 Appease th' afflictive fierce desire of food. 500
 Whoe'er thou art, (the azure Goddess cries),
 Thy conduct ill deserves the praise of wise.
 Is death thy choice, or misery thy boast,
 That here inglorious on a barren coast
 Thy brave associates droop, a meagre train, 505
 With famine pale, and ask thy care in vain ?
 Struck with the kind reproach, I straight reply :
 Whate'er thy title in thy native sky,
 A Goddess sure ! for more than mortal grace
 Speaks thee descendent of æthereal race : 510
 Deem not, that here of choice my fleet remains ;
 Some heav'nly pow'r averse my stay constrains :
 O, piteous of my fate, vouchsafe to shew,
 (For what's sequester'd from celestial view ?)
 What pow'r becalms th' innavigable seas ? 515
 What guilt provokes him, and what vows appease ?
 I ceas'd ; when affable the Goddess cry'd :
 Observe, and in the truths I speake confide :
 Th' orac'lous seer frequents the Pharian coast,
 From whose high bed my birth divine I boast : 520
 Proteus, a name tremendous o'er the main,
 The delegate of Neptune's wat'ry reign.
 Watch with insidious care his known abode ;
 There fast in chains constrain the various God :
 Who bound, obedient to superior force, 525
 Unerring will prescribe your destin'd course.
 If studious of your realms, you then demand
 Their state, since last you left your natal land ;

Instant the God obsequious will disclose
Bright tracks of glory, or a cloud of woes. 530

She ceas'd, and suppliant thus I made reply :
O Goddess ! on thy aid my hopes rely :
Dictate propitious to my duteous ear,
What arts can captivate the changeful seer ?
For perilous th' assay, unheard the toil, 535
T' elude the prescience of a God by guile.

Thus to the Goddess mild my suit I end.
Then she : Obedient to my rule, attend.
When through the zone of heav'n the mounted sun
Hath journey'd half, and half remains to run ; 540
The seer, while zephyrs curl the swelling deep,
Basks on the breezy shore, in grateful sleep,
His oozy limbs. Emerging from the wave,
The Phocæ swift surround his rocky cave,
Frequent and full ; the consecrated train 545

Of her *, whose azure trident awes the main :
There wallowing warm, th' enormous herd exhales
An oily steam, and taints the noon-tide gales.
To that recess, commodious for surprise,
When purple light shall next suffuse the skies, 550

With me repair ; and from thy warrior-band
Three chosen chiefs of dauntless soul command :
Let their auxiliar force befriend the toil,
For strong the God, and perfected in guile. 555

Stretch'd on the shelly shore, he first surveys
The flouncing herd ascending from the seas ;
Their number summ'd, repos'd in sleep profound
The scaly charge their guardian god surround :
So with his batt'ning flocks the careful swain
Abides, pavilion'd on the grassy plain. 560

With pow'rs united, obstinately bold
Invade him, couch'd amid the scaly fold :
Instant he wears, elusive of the rape,
The mimic force of every savage shape :
Or glides with liquid lapse a murm'ring stream, 565
Or, wrapt in flame, he glows at every limb.

* Amphitrite.

Yet still retentive, with redoubled might
 Through each vain passive form constrain his flight.
 But when, his native shape resum'd, he stands
 Patient of conquest, and your cause demands ; 570
 The cause that urg'd the bold attempt declare,
 And sooth the vanquish'd with a victor's pray'r.
 The bands relax'd, implore the seer to say
 What Godhead interdicts the wat'ry way ?
 Who straight propitious, in prophetic strain, 575
 Will teach you to repass th' unmeasur'd main.
 She ceas'd, and bounding from the shelvy shore,
 Round the descending nymph the waves redounding roar..

High rapt in wonder of the future deed,
 With joy impetuous, to the port I speed : 580
 The wants of nature with repast suffice,
 Till night with grateful shade involv'd the skies,
 And shed ambrosial dews. Fast by the deep,
 Along the tented shore, in balmy sleep
 Our cares were lost. When o'er the eastern lawn, 585
 In saffron robes, the daughter of the dawn
 Advanc'd her rosy steps ; before the bay,
 Due ritual honours to the Gods I pay ;
 Then seek the place the sea-born nymph assign'd,
 With three associates of undaunted mind. 590
 Arriv'd, to form along th' appointed strand
 For each a bed, she scoops the hilly sand :
 Then from her azure car, the finny spoils
 Of four vast Phocæ takes, to veil her wiles ;
 Beneath the finny spoils extended prone, 595
 Hard toil ! the prophet's piercing eye to shun ;
 New from the corse, the scaly frauds diffuse
 Unfavoury stench of oil, and brackish ooze :
 But the bright sea-maid's gentle pow'r implor'd,
 With nectar'd drops the sick'ning sense restor'd. 600

Thus till the sun had travell'd half the skies,
 Ambush'd we lie, and wait the bold emprise :
 When thronging quick to bask in open air,
 The flocks of Ocean to the strand repair :
 Couch'd on the sunny sand, the monsters sleep : 605
 Then Proteus mounting from the hoary deep,

Surveys his charge, unknowing of deceit :
 (In order told, we make the sum complete.)
 Pleas'd with the false review, secure he lies,
 And leaden slumbers press his drooping eyes. 610
 Rushing impetuous forth, we straight prepare
 A furious onset with the sound of war,
 And shouting seize the God : our force t' evade
 His various arts he soon resumes in aid :
 A lion now, he curls a surgy mane ; 615
 Sudden, our bands a spotted pard restrain ;
 Then arm'd with tusks, and lightning in his eyes,
 A boar's obscener shape the God belies :
 On spiry volumes, there, a dragon rides ;
 Here, from our strict embrace a stream he glides : 620
 And last, sublime his stately growth he rears,
 A tree, and well-dissembled foliage wears.
 Vain efforts ! with superior pow'r compress'd,
 Me with reluctance thus the seer address'd.
 Say, son of Atreus, say what God inspir'd 625
 This daring fraud, and what the boon desir'd ?
 I thus : O thou, whose certain eye foresees
 The fix'd event of fate's remote decrees ;
 After long woes, and various toil endur'd,
 Still on this desert isle my fleet is moor'd, 630
 Unfriended of the gales. All-knowing ! say,
 What Godhead interdicts the wat'ry way ?
 What vows repentant will the pow'r appease,
 To speed a prosp'rous voyage o'er the seas ?
 To Jove, (with stern regard the God replies), 635
 And all th' offended synod of the skies,
 Just hecatombs, with due devotion slain,
 Thy guilt absolv'd, a prosp'rous voyage gain.
 To the firm sanction of thy fate attend !
 An exile thou, nor cheering face of friend, 640
 Nor sight of natal shore, nor regal dome
 Shalt yet enjoy, but still art doom'd to roam.
 Once more the Nile, who from the secret source
 Of Jove's high seat descends with sweepy force,
 Must view his billows white beneath thy oar, 645
 And altars blaze along his sanguine shore.

Then

Then will the Gods, with holy pomp ador'd,
To thy long vows a safe return accord.

He ceas'd. Heart-wounded with afflictive pain,
(Doom'd to repeat the perils of the main, 650
A shelfy tract, and long !), O seer, I cry,
To the stern sanction of th' offended sky
My prompt obedience bows. But deign to say,
What fate propitious, or what dire dismay
Sustain those peers, the relics of our host, 655
Whom I with Nestor on the Phrygian coast
Embracing left ? Must I the warriors weep,
Whelm'd in the bottom of the monstrous deep ?
Or did the kind domestic friend deplore
The breathless heroes on their native shore ? 660

Press not too far, reply'd the God ; but cease
To know, what known will violate thy peace :
Too curious of their doom ! with friendly wo
Thy breast will heave, and tears eternal flow.
Part live ; the rest, a lamentable train ! 665
Range the dark bounds of Pluto's dreary reign.
Two, foremost in the roll of Mars renown'd,
Whose arms with conquest in thy cause were crown'd,
Fell by disastrous fate ; by tempests tost ;
A third lives wretched on a distant coast : 670

By Neptune rescu'd from Minerva's hate,
On Gyræ, safe Oilean Ajax sat,
His ship o'erwhelm'd ; but frowning on the floods,
Impious he roar'd defiance to the Gods ;
To his own prowess all the glory gave, 675
The pow'r defrauding who vouchsaf'd to save.
This heard the raging ruler of the main ;
His spear, indignant for such high disdain,
He launch'd, dividing with his forky mace
Th' aerial summit from the marble base : 680
The rock rush'd sea-ward with impetuous roar
Ingulf'd, and to th' abyss the boaster bore.

By Juno's guardian aid, the wat'ry vast,
Secure of storms, your royal brother past :
Till coasting nigh the cape, where Malea shrouds 685
Her spiry cliffs amid surrounding clouds,

A whirling gust tumultuous from the shore,
 Across the deep his lab'ring vessel bore.
 In an ill-fated hour the coast he gain'd,
 Where late in regal pomp Thyestes reign'd; 690
 But when his hoary honours bow'd to fate,
 Ægythus govern'd in paternal state.
 The surges now subside, the tempest ends;
 From his tall ship the king of men descends:
 There fondly thinks the Gods conclude his toil! 695
 Far from his own domain salutes the soil:
 With rapture oft the verge of Greece reviews,
 And the dear turf with tears of joy bedews.
 Him thus exulting on the distant strand,
 A spy distinguish'd from his airy stand; 700
 To bribe whose vigilance, Ægythus told
 A mighty sum of ill persuading gold:
 There watch'd this guardian of his guilty fear,
 Till the twelfth moon had wheel'd her pale career;
 And now admonish'd by his eye, to court 705
 With terror wing'd conveys the dread report.
 Of deathful arts expert, his lord employs
 The ministers of blood in dark surprise:
 And twenty youths in radiant mail incas'd,
 Close ambush'd nigh the spacious hall he plac'd. 710
 Then bids prepare the hospitable treat:
 Vain shews of love to veil his felon-hate!
 To grace the victor's welcome from the wars,
 A train of coursers, and triumphal cars
 Magnificent he leads: the royal guest, 715
 Thoughtless of ill, accepts the fraudulent feast.
 The troop forth issuing from the dark recess,
 With homicidal rage the king oppresses!
 So, whilst he feeds luxurious in the stall,
 The sov'reign of the herd is doom'd to fall. 720
 The partners of his fame and toils at Troy,
 Around their lord, a mighty ruin! lie:
 Mix'd with the brave, the base invaders bleed;
 Ægythus sole survives to boast the deed.
 He said: chill horrors shook my shiv'ring soul, 725
 Rack'd with convulsive pangs in dust I roul;
 nd

And hate, in madness of extreme despair,
 To view the sun, or breathe the vital air.
 But when superior to the rage of two,
 I stood restor'd, and tears had ceas'd to flow; 730
 Lenient of grief, the pitying God began —
 Forget the brother, and resume the man :
 To fate's supreme dispose the dead resign;
 That care be fate's, a speedy passage thine,
 Still lives the wretch who wrought the death deplor'd,
 But lives a victim for thy vengeful sword; 736
 Unless with filial rage Orestes glow,
 And swift prevent the meditated blow :
 You timely will return a welcome guest,
 With him to share the sad funereal feast. 740

He said : new thoughts my beating heart employ,
 My gloomy soul receives a gleam of joy.
 Fair hope revives ; and eager I address
 The prescient Godhead to reveal the rest.
 The doom decreed of those disastrous two 745
 I've heard with pain ; but oh ! the tale pursue ;
 What third brave son of Mars the fates constrain
 To roam the howling desert of the main :
 Or in eternal shade if cold he lies,
 Provoke new sorrow from these grateful eyes. 750

That chief (rejoin'd the God) his race derives
 From Ithaca, and wondrous woes survives ;
 Laertes' son : girt with circumfluous tides,
 He still calamitous constraint abides.
 Him in Calypso's cave of late I view'd, 755
 When streaming grief his faded cheek bedew'd.
 But vain his pray'r, his arts are vain to move
 Th' enamour'd Goddess, or elude her love :
 His vessel sunk, and dear companions lost,
 He lives reluctant on a foreign coast. 760
 But oh belov'd by heav'n ! reserv'd to thee
 A happier lot the smiling fates decree :
 Free from that law, beneath whose mortal sway
 Matter is chang'd, and varying forms decay ;
 Elysium shall be thine ; the blissful plains 765
 Of utmost earth, where Rhadamanthus reigns.

Joys

Joys ever young, unmix'd with pain or fear,
Fill the wide circle of th' eternal year :

Stern winter smiles on that auspicious clime :

The fields are florid with unfading prime : 770

From the bleak pole no winds inclement blow,

Mould the round hail, or flake the fleecy snow ;

But from the breezy deep the blest'd inhale

The fragrant murmurs of the western gale.

This grace peculiar will the Gods afford 775

To thee the son of Jove, and beauteous Helen's lord.

He ceas'd, and plunging in the vast profound,

Beneath the God the whirling billows bound.

Then speeding back, involv'd in various thought,

My friends attending at the shore I sought. 780

Arriv'd, the rage of hunger we control,

Till night with silent shade invests the pole ;

Then lose the cares of life in pleasing rest. —

Soon as the morn reveals the roseate east,

With sails we wing the masts, our anchors weigh, 785

Unmoor the fleet, and rush into the sea.

Rang'd on the banks, beneath our equal oars

White curl the waves, and the vex'd ocean roars.

Then steering back ward from the Pharian isle,

We gain the stream of Jove-descended Nile : 790

There quit the ships, and on the destin'd shore

With ritual hecatombs the Gods adore :

Their wrath aton'd, to Agamemnon's name

A cenotaph I raise of deathless fame.

These rites to piety and grief discharg'd, 795

The friendly Gods a springing gale enlarg'd :

The fleet swift tilting o'er the surges flew,

Till Grecian cliffs appear'd, a blissful view !

Thy patient ear hath heard me long relate

A story, fruitful of disastrous fate : 800

And now, young prince, indulge my fond request ;

Be Sparta honour'd with his royal guest,

Till from his eastern goal the joyous sun

His twelfth diurnal race begins to run.

Meantime my train the friendly gifts prepare, 805

Three sprightly courfers, and a polish'd car :

With

With these, a goblet of capacious mold,
Figur'd with art to dignify the gold,
(Form'd for libation to the Gods), shall prove
A pledge and monument of sacred love. 810

My quick return, young Ithacus rejoin'd,
Damps the warm wishes of my raptur'd mind :
Did not my fate my needful haste constrain,
Charm'd by your speech, so graceful and humane,
Lost in delight the circling year would roll, 815
While deep attention fix'd my list'ning soul.

But now to Pyle permit my destin'd way,
My lov'd associates chide my long delay.
In dear remembrance of your royal grace,
I take the present of the promis'd vase ; 820

The coursers for the champaign sports, retain ;
That gift our barren rocks will render vain :
Horrid with cliffs, our meagre land allows
Thin herbage for the mountain-goat to browse ;
But neither mead nor plain supplies, to feed 825
The sprightly courser, or indulge his speed :
To sea-surrounded realms the Gods assign
Small tract of fertile land, the least to mine.

His hand the king with tender passion press'd,
And smiling, thus the royal youth address'd : 830
O early worth ! a soul so wise, and young,
Proclaims you from the sage Ulysses sprung.
Selected from my stores, of matchless price
An urn shall recompense your prudent choice :
Not mean the massy mould of silver, grac'd 835
By Vulcan's art, the verge with gold enchas'd :
A pledge the sceptred pow'r of Sidon gave,
When to his realm I plough'd the orient wave.

Thus they alternate ; while with artful care-
The menial train the regal feast prepare : 840
The firstlings of the flock are doom'd to die ;
Rich fragrant wines the cheering bowl supply ;
A female band the gift of Ceres bring ;
And the gilt roofs with genial triumph ring.

Meanwhile, in Ithaca, the suitor-pow'rs 845
In active games divide their jovial hours :

In areas vary'd with mosaic art,
 Some whirl the disk, and some the jav'lin dart.
 Aside, sequester'd from the vast resort,
 Antinous sat spectator of the sport ; 850
 With great Eurymachus, of worth confest,
 And high descent, superior to the rest ;
 Whom young Noëmon lowly thus address.

My ship equipp'd within the neigh'ring port,
 The prince departing for the Pylian court, 855
 Requested for his speed ; but, courteous, say
 When steers he home ? or why this long delay ?
 For Elis I should sail with utmost speed,
 T' import twelve mares which there luxurious feed,
 And twelve young mules, a strong, laborious race, 860
 New to the plough, unpractis'd in the trace.

Unknowing of the course to Pyle design'd,
 A sudden horror seiz'd on either mind :
 The prince in rural bow'r they fondly thought,
 Numb'ring his flocks and herds, not far remote. 865
 Relate, Antinous cries, devoid of guile,
 When spread the prince his sail for distant Pyle ?
 Did chosen chiefs across the gulfy main
 Attend his voyage, or domestic train ?
 Spontaneous did you speed his secret course, 870
 Or was the vessel seiz'd by fraud or force ?

With willing duty, not reluctant mind,
 (Noëmon cry'd), the vessel was resign'd.
 Who, in the balance with the great affairs
 Of courts, presume to weigh their private cares ? 875
 With him, the peerage next in pow'r to you :
 And Mentor, captain of the lordly crew,
 Or some celestial in his rev'rend form,
 Safe from the secret rock and adverse storm,
 Pilots the course : for when the glimm'ring ray. 880
 Of yester dawn disclos'd the tender day,
 Mentor himself I saw, and much admir'd.——
 Then ceas'd the youth, and from the court retir'd.

Confounded and appall'd, th' unfinish'd game
 The suitors quit, and all to council came : 885

Antinous.

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Antinous first th' assembled peers address,
 Rage sparkling in his eyes, and burning in his breast.
 O shame to manhood ! shall one daring boy
 The scheme of all our happiness destroy ?
 Fly unperceiv'd, seducing half the flow'r 890
 Of nobles, and invite a foreign pow'r ?
 The pond'rous engine rais'd to crush us all,
 Recoiling, on his head is sure to fall.
 Instant prepare me, on the neighb'ring strand,
 With twenty chosen mates a vessel mann'd ; 895
 For, ambush'd close beneath the Samian shore,
 His ships returning shall my spies explore :
 He soon his rashness shall with life atone,
 Seek for his father's fate, but find his own.
 With vast applause the sentence all approve ; 900
 Then rise, and to the feastful hall remove :
 Swift to the queen the herald Medon ran,
 Who heard the consult of the dire divan :
 Before her dome the royal matron stands,
 And thus the message of his haste demands. 905
 What will the suitors ? must my servant-train
 Th' allotted labours of the day refrain,
 For them to form some exquisite repast ?
 Heav'n grant this festival may prove their last !
 Or if they still must live, from me remove 910
 The double plague of luxury and love !
 Forbear, ye sons of insolence ! forbear,
 In riot to consume a wretched heir.
 In the young soul illustrious thought to raise,
 Were ye not tutor'd with Ulysses' praise ? 915
 Have not your fathers oft my lord defin'd,
 Gentle of speech, beneficent of mind ?
 Some kings with arbitrary rage devour,
 Or in their tyrant-minions vest the power :
 Ulysses let no partial favours fall, 920
 The people's parent, he protected all :
 But absent now, perfidious and ingrate !
 His stores ye ravage, and usurp his state.
 He thus : O were the woes you speak the worst !
 They form a deed more odious and accurst ; 925
 More

More dreadful than your boding soul divines :
 But pitying Jove avert the dire designs !
 The darling object of your royal care
 Is mark'd to perish in a deathful snare :
 Before he anchors in his native port, 930
 From Pyle resailing and the Spartan court,
 Horrid to speak ! in ambush is decreed
 The hope and heir of Ithaca to bleed !

Sudden she sunk beneath the weighty woes,
 The vital streams a chilling horror froze : 935
 The big round tear stands trembling in her eye,
 And on her tongue imperfect accents die.

At length, in tender language, interwove
 With sighs, she thus express'd her anxious love.
 Why rashly would my son his fate explore, 940
 Ride the wild waves, and quit the safer shore ?
 Did he, with all the greatly wretched, crave
 A blank oblivion, and untimely grave !

'Tis not, reply'd the sage, to Medon giv'n
 To know, if some inhabitant of heav'n 945
 In his young breast the daring thought inspir'd ;
 Or if, alone with filial duty fir'd,
 The winds and waves he tempts in early bloom,
 Studious to learn his absent father's doom.

The sage retir'd. Unable to controul 950
 The mighty griefs that swell her lab'ring soul,
 Rolling convulsive on the floor, is seen
 The piteous object of a prostrate queen.
 Words to her dumb complaint a pause supplies,
 And breath, to waste in unavailing cries. 955
 Around their sov'reign wept the menial fair,
 To whom she thus address'd her deep despair.

Behold a wretch, whom all the Gods consign
 To wo ! Did ever sorrows equal mine ?
 Long to my joys my dearest lord is lost, 960
 His country's buckler, and the Grecian boast :
 Now from my fond embrace, by tempests torn,
 Our other column of the state is born :
 Nor took a kind adieu, nor sought consent ! —
 Unkind confed'rates in his dire intent ! 965

All suits it with your shews of duteous zeal,
 From me the purpos'd voyage to conceal :
 Though at the solemn midnight-hour he rose,
 Why did you fear to trouble my repose ?
 He either had obey'd my fond desire, 970
 Or seen his mother pierc'd with grief expire.
 Bid Dolius quick attend, the faithful slave
 Whom to my nuptial train Icarius gave,
 To tend the fruit-groves : with incessant speed
 He shall this violence of death decreed, 975
 To good Laertes tell. Experienc'd age
 May timely intercept the ruffian-rage,
 Convene the tribes, the murd'rous plot reveal,
 And to their pow'r to save his race appeal.

Then Euryclea thus : My dearest dread ! 980
 Though to the sword I bow this hoary head,
 Or if a dungeon be the pain decreed,
 I own me conscious of th' unpleasing deed :
 Auxiliar to his flight, my aid implor'd,
 With wine and viands I the vessel stor'd : 985
 A solemn oath, impos'd, the secret seal'd,
 Till the twelfth dawn the light of heav'n reveal'd.
 Dreading th' effect of a fond mother's fear,
 He dar'd not violate your royal ear.
 But bathe, and in imperial robes array'd, 990 }
 Pay due devotions to the martial * maid,
 And rest affianc'd in her guardian aid. }
 Send not to good Laertes, nor engage
 In toils of state the miseries of age :
 'Tis impious to surmise, the pow'rs divine 995
 To ruin doom the Jove-descended line :
 Long shall the race of just Arcegius reign,
 And isles remote enlarge his old domain.

The queen her speech with calm attention hears,
 Her eyes restrain the silver-streaming tears : 1000
 She bathes, and rob'd, the sacred dome ascends :
 Her pious speed a female train attends :
 The salted cakes in canisters are laid ;
 And thus the queen invokes Minerva's aid.

* Minerva.

† G

Daughter

Daughter divine of Jove, whose arm can wield 1005
 Th' avenging bolt, and shake the dreadful shield !
 If e'er Ulysses to thy fane preferr'd
 The best and choicest of his flock and herd ;
 Hear, Goddess, hear, by those oblations won ;
 And for the pious sire preserve the son : 1010
 His wish'd return with happy pow'r besfriend,
 And on the suitors let thy wrath descend.

She ceas'd ; shrill ecstasies of joy declare
 The fav'ring Goddess present to the pray'r.
 The suitors heard, and deem'd the mirthful voice 1015
 A signal of her hymenæal choice :
 Whilst one most jovial thus accosts the board ;
 “ Too late the queen selects a second lord :
 “ In evil hour the nuptial rite intends,
 “ When o'er her son disastrous death impends.” 1020
 Thus he, unskill'd of what the fates provide !
 But with severe rebuke Antinous cry'd.

These empty vaunts will make the voyage vain ;
 Alarm not with discourse the menial train :
 The great event with silent hope attend ; 1025
 Our deeds alone our counsel must commend.

His speech thus ended short, he frowning rose,
 And twenty chiefs renown'd for valour chose :
 Down to the strand he speeds with haughty strides,
 Where anchor'd in the bay the vessel rides, 1030
 Replete with mail and military store,
 In all her tackle trim to quit the shore.
 The desp'rate crew ascend, unfurl the sails ;
 (The sea-ward prow invites the tardy gales) ;
 Then take repast, till Hesperus display'd 1035
 His golden circlet in the western shade.

Meantime the queen without refection due,
 Heart wounded, to the bed of state withdrew :
 In her sad breast the prince's fortunes roul,
 And hope and doubt alternate seize her soul. 1040
 So when the wood man's toil her cave surrounds,
 And with the hunter's cry the grove resounds ;
 With grief and rage the mother lion stung,
 Fearless herself, yet trembles for her young.

While

While pensive in the silent slumb'rous shade, 1045
 Sleep's gentle pow'rs her drooping eyes invade ;
 Minerva, life-like on imbody'd air,

Impress'd the form of Iphthima the fair :
 (Icarius' daughter she, whose blooming charms
 Allur'd Eumelus to her virgin-arms ; 1050

A sceptred lord, who o'er the fruitful plain
 Of Thessaly wide stretch'd his ample reign) :
 As Pallas will'd, along the sable skies
 To calm the queen the phantom sister flies.
 Swift on the regal dome descending right, 1055
 The bolted valves are pervious to her flight.
 Close to her head the pleasing vision stands,
 And thus performs Minerva's high commands.

O why, Penelope, this causeless fear,
 To render sleep's soft blessing unsincere ? 1060
 Alike devote to sorrow's dire extreme
 The day-reflection, and the midnight-dream !
 Thy son the Gods propitious will restore,
 And bid thee cease his absence to deplore.

To whom the queen, (whilst yet her pensive mind
 Was in the silent gates of sleep confin'd) : 1065
 O sister, to my soul for ever dear !

Why this first visit to reprove my fear ?
 How in a realm so distant should you know
 From what deep source my ceaseless sorrows flow ?

To all my hopes my royal lord is lost, 1070
 His country's buckler, and the Grecian boast :

And with consummate wo to weigh me down,
 The heir of all his honours, and his crown,
 My darling son is fled ! an easy prey 1075

To the fierce storms, or men more fierce than they ;
 Who in a league of blood associates sworn,
 Will intercept th' unwary youth's return.

Courage resume, the shadowy form reply'd,
 In the protecting care of heav'n confide : 1080

On him attends the blue-ey'd martial maid ;
 What earthly can implore a surer aid ?

Me now the guardian Goddess deigns to send,
 To bid thee patient his return attend.

The queen replies : If in the blest'd abodes, 1085
 A Goddess, thou hast commerce with the Gods ;
 Say, breathes my lord the blissful realm of light,
 Or lies he wrapt in ever-during night ?

Inquire not of his doom, the phantom cries :
 I speak not all the counsel of the skies ; 1090
 Nor must indulge with vain discourse, or long,
 The windy satisfaction of the tongue.

Swift through the valves the visionary fair
 Repass'd, and viewless mix'd with common air.
 The queen awakes, deliver'd of her woes ; 1095
 With florid joy her heart dilating glows :
 The vision, manifest of future fate,
 Makes her with hope her son's arrival wait.

Meantime the suitors plough the wat'ry plain,
 Telemachus in thought already slain ! 1100
 When sight of less'ning Ithaca was lost,
 Their sail directed for the Samian coast,
 A small but verdant isle appear'd in view,
 And Asteris th' advancing pilot knew :
 An ample port the rocks projected form, 1105
 To break the rolling waves, and ruffling storm :
 That safe recess they gain with happy speed,
 And in close ambush wait the murd'rous deed.

THE

T H E O D Y S S E Y.

B O O K V.

T H E A R G U M E N T.

The departure of Ulysses from Calypso.

Pallas, in a council of the Gods, complains of the detention of Ulysses in the island of Calypso; whereupon Mercury is sent to command his removal. The seat of Calypso described. She consents with much difficulty, and Ulysses builds a vessel with his own hands, on which he embarks. Neptune overtakes him with a terrible tempest, in which he is shipwrecked, and in the last danger of death; till Leucothea, a sea-goddess, assists him, and after innumerable perils he gets ashore on Phaeacia.

TH E saffron morn, with early blushes spread,
Now rose resurgent from Tithonus' bed;
With new-born day to gladden mortal sight,
And gild the courts of heav'n with sacred light.

Then met th' eternal synod of the sky,
Before the God who thunders from on high,
Supreme in might, sublime in majesty.
Pallas, to these, deplores th' unequal fates
Of wise Ulysses, and his toils relates;
Her hero's danger touch'd the pitying pow'r,
The nymph's seducements, and the magic bow'r.

Thus she began her plaint. Immortal Jove!
And you who fill the blissful seats above!
Let kings no more with gentle mercy sway,
Or bless a people willing to obey,

But crush the nations with an iron rod,
 And every monarch be the scourge of God ;
 If from your thoughts Ulysses you remove,
 Who rul'd his subjects with a father's love.
 Sole in an isle, encircled by the main, 20
 Abandon'd, banish'd from his native reign,
 Unblest'd he sighs, detain'd by lawless charms,
 And press'd unwilling in Calypso's arms.
 Nor friends are there, nor vessels to convey,
 Nor oars to cut th' immeasurable way. 25
 And now fierce traitors, studious to destroy
 His only son, their ambush'd fraud employ;
 Who, pious, following his great father's fame,
 To sacred Pylos and to Sparta came. 29

What words are these ? (reply'd the pow'r who forms
 The clouds of night, and darkens heav'n with storms).
 Is not already in thy soul decreed,
 The chief's return shall make the guilty bleed ?
 What cannot Wisdom do ? Thou mayst restore
 The son in safety to his native shore ; 35
 While the fell foes who late in ambush lay,
 With fraud defeated measure back their way.

Then thus to Hermes the command was giv'n.
 Hermes, thou chosen messenger of heav'n !
 Go, to the nymph be these our orders born : 40
 'Tis Jove's decree Ulysses shall return :
 The patient man shall view his old abodes,
 Nor help'd by mortal hand, nor guiding Gods :
 In twice ten days shall fertile Scheria find,
 Alone, and floating to the wave and wind. 45
 The bold Phæacians there, whose haughty line
 Is mix'd with Gods, half human, half divine,
 The chief shall honour as some heav'nly guest,
 And swift transport him to his place of rest ;
 His vessels loaded with a plenteous store 50
 Of brass, of vestures, and resplendent ore ;
 (A richer prize than if his joyful isle
 Receiv'd him charg'd with Ilion's noble spoil) :
 His friends, his country he shall see, though late ;
 Such is our sovereign will, and such is fate. 55

He spoke. The God who moun's the winged winds,
 Fast to his feet the golden pinions binds,
 That high through fields of air his flight sustain
 O'er the wide earth, and o'er the boundless main.
 He grasps the wand that causes sleep to fly, 60
 Or in soft slumber seals the wakeful eye :
 Then shoots from heav'n to high Pieria's steep,
 And stoops incumbent on the rolling deep.
 So wat'ry fowl, that seek their fishy food;
 With wings expanded o'er the foaming flood, 65
 Now sailing smooth the level surface sweep,
 Now d p their pinions in the briny deep.
 Thus o'er the world of waters Hermes flew,
 Till now the distant island rose in view :
 Then swift ascending from the azure wave, 70
 He took the path that winded to the cave.
 Large was the grot, in which the nymph he found,
 (The fair-hair'd nymph with ev'ry beauty crown'd) ;
 She sat and sung ; the rocks resound her lays :
 The cave was brighten'd with a rising blaze : 75
 Cedar and frankincense, an od'rous pile,
 Flam'd on the hearth, and wide perfum'd the isle ;
 While she with work and song the time divides,
 And through the loom the golden shuttle guides.
 Without the grot, a various sylvan scene 80
 Appear'd around, and groves of living green ;
 Poplars and alders ever quiv'ring play'd,
 And nodding cypress form'd a fragrant shade ;
 On whose high branches, waving with the storm,
 The birds of broadest wing their mansion form, 85
 The chough, the sea mew, the loquacious crow,
 And scream aloft, and skim the deeps below.
 Depending vines the shelving cavern screen,
 With purple clusters blushing through the green.
 Four limpid fountains from the clefts distil, 90 }
 And er'ry fountain pours a sev'ral rill, }
 In mazy windings wand'ring down the hill :
 Where bloomy meads with vivid greens were crown'd,
 And glowing violets threw odours round.
 A scene, where if a God should cast his sight, 95
 A God might gaze, and wonder with delight !

Joy

Jay touch'd the messenger of heav'n : he stay'd
 Entranc'd, and all the blissful haunt survey'd.
 Him, ent'ring in the cave, Calypso knew ;
 For pow'rs celestial to each other's view 100
 Stand still confess'd, though distant far they lie
 To habitants of earth, or sea, or sky.

But sad Ulysses, by himself apart,
 Pour'd the big sorrows of his swelling heart ;
 All on the lonely shore he sat to weep, 105
 And roll'd his eyes around the restless deep ;
 Tow'rd his lov'd coast he roll'd his eyes in vain,
 Till dimm'd with rising grief, they stream'd again.

Now graceful seated on her shining throne,
 To Hermes thus the nymph divine begun. 110

God of the golden wand ! on what behest
 Arriv'st thou here, an unexpected guest ?
 Lov'd as thou art, thy free injunctions lay ;
 'Tis mine, with joy and duty to obey.
 Till now a stranger, in a happy hour 115
 Approach, and taste the dainties of my bow'r.

Thus having spoke, the nymph the table spread,
 (Ambrosial cates, with nectar rosy-red) ;
 Hermes the hospitable rite partook,
 Divine refection ! then recruited, spoke. 120

What mov'd this journey from my native sky,
 A Goddess asks, nor can a God deny :
 Hear then the truth. By mighty Jove's command,
 Unwilling, have I trod this pleasing land ;
 For who, self-mov'd, with weary wing would sweep
 Such length of ocean and unmeasur'd deep ; 126
 A world of waters ! far from all the ways
 Where men frequent, or sacred altars blaze ?
 But to Jove's will submission we must pay ;
 What pow'r so great, to dare to disobey ? 130
 A man, he says, a man resides with thee,
 Of all his kind most worn with misery :
 The Greeks (whose arms for nine long years employ'd
 Their force on Ilion, in the tenth destroy'd)
 At length embarking in a luckless hour, 135
 With conquest proud, incens'd Minerva's pow'r :

Hence

Hence on the guilty race her vengeance hurl'd,
 With storms pursu'd them through the liquid world.
 There all his vessels sunk beneath the wave !
 There all his dear companions found their grave ! 140
 Sav'd from the jaws of death by heav'n's decree,
 The tempest drove him to these shores and thee.
 Him Jove now orders to his native lands
 Straight to dismiss ; so destiny commands :
 Impatient fate his near return intends, 145
 And calls him to his country, and his friends.
 Ev'n to her inmost soul the Goddess shook ;
 Then thus her anguish and her passion broke.
 Ungracious Gods ! with spite and envy curst !
 Still to your own æthereal race the worst ! 150
 Ye envy mortal and immortal joy,
 And love, the only sweet of life, destroy.
 Did ever Goddess by her charms engage
 A favour'd mortal, and not feel your rage ?
 So when Aurora sought Orion's love, 155
 Her joys disturb'd your blissful hours above,
 Till, in Ortygia, Dian's winged dart
 Had pierc'd the hapless hunter to the heart.
 So when the covert of the thrice-ear'd field
 Saw stately Ceres to her passion yield, 160
 Scarce could Iasion taste her heav'nly charms,
 But Jove's swift lightning scorch'd him in her arms.
 And is it now my turn, ye mighty pow'rs !
 Am I the envy of your blissful bow'rs ?
 A man, an outcast to the storm and wave, 165
 It was my crime to pity, and to save ;
 When he who thunders rent his bark in twain,
 And sunk his brave companions in the main.
 Alone, abandon'd, in mid ocean tost,
 The sport of winds, and driv'n from ev'ry coast, 170
 Hither this man of miseries I led,
 Receiv'd the friendless, and the hungry fed ;
 Nay promis'd (vainly promis'd !) to bestow
 Immortal life, exempt from age and wo.
 'Tis past — and Jove decrees he shall remove : 175
 Gods as we are, we are but slaves to Jove.

Go then he may, (he must, if he ordain,
 Try all those dangers, all those deeps, again).
 But never, never shall Calypso send
 To toils like these, her husband and her friend. 180
 What ships have I, what sailors to convey,
 What oars to cut the long laborious way?
 Yet I'll direct the safest means to go:
 That last advice is all I can bestow.

To her the pow'r who bears the charming rod:
 Dismiss the man, nor irritate the God; 186
 Prevent the rage of him who reigns above,
 For what so dreadful as the wrath of Jove?
 Thus having said, he cut the cleaving sky,
 And in a moment vanish'd from her eye. 190
 The nymph, obedient to divine command,
 To seek Ulysses, pac'd along the sand.
 Him pensive on the lonely beach she found,
 With streaming eyes in briny torrents drown'd,
 And only pining for his native shore; 195
 For now the soft enchantress pleas'd no more:
 For now, reluctant, and constrain'd by charms,
 Absent he lay in her desiring arms,
 In slumber wore the heavy night away,
 On rocks and shores consum'd the tedious day; 200
 There sat all desolate, and sigh'd alone,
 With echoing sorrows made the mountains groan,
 And roll'd his eyes o'er all the restless main,
 Till dimm'd with rising grief, they stream'd again.

Here, on his musing mood the Goddess press'd, 205
 Approaching soft; and thus the chief address'd.
 Unhappy man! to wasting woes a prey,
 No more in sorrows languish life away:
 Free as the winds I give thee now to rove —
 Go, fell the timber of yon lofty grove, 210
 And form a raft, and build the rising ship,
 Sublime to bear thee o'er the gloomy deep.
 To store the vessel let the care be mine,
 With water from the rock, and rosy wine,
 And life-sustaining bread, and fair array, 215
 And prosp'rous gales to waft thee on thy way.

These,

These, if the Gods with my desires comply,
 (The Gods, alas ! more mighty far than I,
 And better skill'd in dark events to come),
 In peace shall land thee at thy native home. 220

With sighs, Ulysses heard the words she spoke,
 Then thus his melancholy silence broke.
 Some other motive, Goddess ! sways thy mind,
 (Some close design, or turn of womankind) ;
 Nor my return the end, nor this the way, 225
 On a slight raft to pass the swelling sea,
 Huge, horrid, vast ! where scarce in safety fails
 The best built ship, though Jove inspire the gales.
 The bold proposal how shall I fulfil,
 Dark as I am, unconscious of thy will ? 230
 Swear then, thou mean'st not what my soul forebodes ;
 Swear by the solemn oath that binds the Gods.

Him, while he spoke, with smiles Calypso ey'd,
 And gently grasp'd his hand, and thus reply'd.
 This shews thee, friend, by old experience taught, 235
 And learn'd in all the wiles of human thought.
 How prone to doubt, how cautious are the wise ?
 But hear, oh earth, and hear ye sacred skies !
 And thou, oh Styx ! whose formidable floods
 Glide though the shades, and bind th' attesting Gods !
 No form'd design, no meditated end 241
 Lurks in the counsel of thy faithful friend ;
 Kind the persuasion, and sincere my aim ;
 The same my practice, were my fate the same.
 Heav'n has not curs'd me with a heart of steel, 245
 But giv'n the sense, to pity and to feel.

Thus having said, the Goddess march'd before :
 He trod her footsteps in the sandy shore.
 At the cool cave arriv'd, they took their state ;
 He fill'd the throne where Mercury had sat. 250
 For him the nymph a rich repast ordains,
 Such as the mortal life of man sustains ;
 Before herself were plac'd the cates divine,
 Ambrosial banquet, and celestial wine.
 Their hunger satiate, and their thirst repress, 255
 Thus spoke Calypso to her godlike guest.

Ulysses !

Ulysses ! (with a sigh she thus began),
 O sprung from Gods ! in wisdom more than man ;
 Is then thy home the passion of thy heart ?
 Thus wilt thou leave me ? are we thus to part ? 260
 Farewell ! and ever joyful mayst thou be,
 Nor break the transport with one thought of me.
 But, ah Ulysses ! wert thou giv'n to know
 What fate yet dooms thee, yet, to undergo ;
 Thy heart might settle in this scene of ease, 265
 And ev'n these slighted charms might learn to please.
 A willing Goddess, and immortal life,
 Might banish from thy mind an absent wife.
 Am I inferior to a mortal dame ?
 Less soft my feature, less august my frame ? 270
 Or shall the daughters of mankind compare
 Their earth-born beauties with the heav'nly fair ?
 Alas ! for this (the prudent man replies)
 Against Ulysses shall thy anger rise ?
 Lov'd and ador'd, oh Goddess ! as thou art, 275
 Forgive the weakness of a human heart.
 Though well I see thy graces far above
 The dear, though mortal, object of my love,
 Of youth eternal well the difference know,
 And the short date of fading charms below ; 280
 Yet ev'ry day, while absent thus I roam,
 I languish to return, and die at home.
 Whate'er the Gods shall destine me to bear
 In the black ocean, or the wat'ry war,
 'Tis mine to master with a constant mind ; 285
 Inur'd to perils, to the worst resign'd.
 By seas, by wars, so many dangers run,
 Still I can suffer : their high will be done !
 Thus while he spoke, the beamy sun descends,
 And rising night her friendly shade extends. 290
 To the close grot the lonely pair remove,
 And slept delighted with the gifts of love.
 When rosy morning call'd them from their rest,
 Ulysses rob'd him in the cloke and vest.
 The nymph's fair head a veil transparent grac'd, 295
 Her swelling loins a radiant zone embrac'd

With

With flow'rs of gold : an under-robe, unbound,
 In snowy waves flow'd glitt'ring on the ground.
 Forth-issuing thus, she gave him first to wield
 A weighty axe, with truest temper steel'd, 300
 And double-edg'd ; the handle smooth and plait,
 Wrought of the clouded olive's easy grain ;
 And next, a wedge to drive with sweepy sway :
 Then to the neighb'ring forest led the way.
 On the lone island's utmost verge there stood 305
 Of poplars, pines, and firs, a lofty wood,
 Whose leafless summits to the skies aspire,
 Scorch'd by the sun, or fear'd by heav'nly fire,
 (Already dry'd). These pointing out to view,
 The nymph just shew'd him, and with tears withdrew.

Now toils the hero : trees on trees o'erthrown 311
 Fall crackling round him, and the forests groan :
 Sudden, full twenty on the plain are strow'd,
 And lopp'd, and lighten'd of their branchy load.
 At equal angles these dispos'd to join, 315
 He smooth'd and squar'd 'em, by the rule and line.
 (The wimbles for the work Calypso found) ;
 With those he pierc'd 'em, and with clinchers bound.
 Long and capacious, as a shipwright forms
 Some bark's broad bottom to outride the storms, 320
 So large he built the raft : then ribb'd it strong
 From space to space, and nail'd the planks along :
 These form'd the sides : the deck he fashion'd last ;
 Then o'er the vessel rais'd the taper mast,
 With crossing sail-yards dancing in the wind ; 325
 And to the helm the guiding rudder join'd,
 (With yielding osiers fenc'd, to break the force
 Of surging waves, and steer the steady course).
 Thy loom, Calypso ! for the future sails
 Supply'd the cloth, capacious of the gales. 330
 With stays and cordage last he rigg'd the ship,
 And, roll'd on levers, launch'd her in the deep.

Four days were past, and now the work complete,
 Shone the fifth morn : when from her sacred seat
 The nymph dismiss'd him, (od'rous garments giv'n, 335
 And bath'd in fragrant oils that breath'd of heav'n) :

Then fill'd two goat skins with her hands divine,
 With water one, and one with fable wine :
 Of ev'ry kind, provisions heav'd aboard,
 And the full decks with copious viands stor'd. 340
 The Goddess, last, a gentle breeze supplies,
 To curl old ocean, and to warm the skies.

And now rejoicing in the prosp'rous gales,
 With beating heart Ulysses spreads his sails ;
 Plac'd at the helm he sat, and mark'd the skies, 345
 Nor clos'd in sleep his ever-watchful eyes.

There view'd the Pleiads, and the northern Team,
 And great Orion's more refulgent beam,
 To which, around the axle of the sky
 The Bear revolving, points his golden eye : 350

Who shines exalted on th' æthereal plain,
 Nor bathes his blazing forehead in the main.
 Far on the left those radiant fires to keep
 The nymph directed, as he sail'd the deep.

Full sev'nteen nights he cut the foamy way ; 355
 The distant land appear'd the following day :
 Then swell'd to sight Phæacia's dusky coast,
 And woody mountains, half in vapours lost ;
 That lay before him, indistinct and vast,
 Like a broad shield amid the wat'ry waste. 360

But him, thus voyaging the deeps below,
 From far, on Solymé's aerial brow,
 The king of ocean saw, and seeing burn'd,
 (From Æthiopia's happy climes return'd) :
 The raging monarch shook his azure head, 365
 And thus in secret to his soul he said.

Heav'ns ! how uncertain are the pow'rs on high !
 Is then revers'd the sentence of the sky,
 In one man's favour, while a distant guest
 I shar'd secure th' Æthiopian feast ? 370
 Behold how near Phæacia's land he draws !
 The land affix'd by fate's eternal laws
 To end his toils. Is then our anger vain ?
 No ; if this sceptre yet commands the main.

He spoke, and high the forky trident hurl'd, 375
 Rolls clouds on clouds, and stirs the wat'ry world,

At once the face of earth and sea deforms,
Swells all the winds, and rouses all the storms.
Down rush'd the night. East, west, together roar,
And south, and north, roll mountains to the shore ;
Then shook the hero, to despair resign'd, 381
And question'd thus his yet-unconquer'd mind.

Wretch that I am ! what farther fates attend
This life of toils, and what my destin'd end ?
Too well, alas ! the island goddess knew, 385
On the black sea what perils should ensue.
New horrors now this destin'd head inclose ;
Unfill'd is yet the measure of my woes.

With what a cloud the brows of heav'n are crown'd ?
What raging winds ? what roaring waters round ?
'Tis Jove himself the swelling tempest rears ; 391
Death, present death, on ev'ry side appears.
Happy ! thrice happy ! who, in battle slain,
Press'd, in Atrides' cause, the Trojan plain :
Oh ! had I dy'd before that well-fought wall ; 395
Had some distinguish'd day renown'd my fall,
(Such as was that, when show'rs of jav'lins fled
From conqu'ring Troy around Achilles dead) ;
All Greece had paid me solemn fun'erals then,
And spread my glory with the sons of men. 400
A shameful fate now hides my hapless head,
Unwept, unnoted, and for ever dead !

A mighty wave rush'd o'er him as he spoke,
The raft it cover'd, and the mast it broke ;
Swept from the deck, and from the rudder torn, 405
Far on the swelling surge the chief was born ;
While by the howling tempest rent in twain
Flew sail and sail-yards rattling o'er the main.
Long press'd, he heav'd beneath the weighty wave,
Clogg'd by the cumbrous vest Calypso gave : 410
At length emerging, from his nostrils wide,
And gushing mouth, effus'd the briny tide.
Ev'n then, not mindless of his last retreat,
He seiz'd the raft, and leap'd into his seat,
Strong with the fear of death. The rolling flood 415
Now here, now there, impell'd the floating wood.

As when a heap of gather'd thorns is cast
 Now to, now fro, before th' autumnal blast ;
 Together clung, it rolls around the field ;
 So roll'd the float, and so its texture held : 420
 And now the south, and now the north, bear sway,
 And now the east the foamy floods obey,
 And now the west-wind whirls it o'er the sea. }

The wand'ring chief, with toils on toils oppress'd,
 Leucothea saw, and pity touch'd her breast 425
 (Herself a mortal once, of Cadmus' strain,
 But now an azure sister of the main) :
 Swift as a sea-mew springing from the flood,
 All radiant on the raft the Goddess stood ;
 Then thus address'd him. Thou, whom heav'n decrees
 To Neptune's wrath, stern tyrant of the seas, 431
 (Unequal contest) ; not his rage and pow'r,
 Great as he is, such virtue shall devour.
 What I suggest thy wisdom will perform ;
 Forfake thy float, and leave it to the storm ; 435
 Strip off thy garments ; Neptune's fury brave
 With naked strength, and plunge into the wave.
 To reach Phæacia all thy nerves extend,
 There fate decrees thy miseries shall end.
 This heav'nly scarf beneath thy bosom bind, 440
 And live ; give all thy terrors to the wind.
 Soon as thy arms the happy shore shall gain,
 Return the gift, and cast it in the main :
 Observe my orders, and with heed obey,
 Cast it far off, and turn thy eyes away. 445

With that, her hand the sacred veil bestows,
 Then down the deeps she div'd, from whence she rose :
 A moment snatch'd the shining form away,
 And all was cover'd with the curling sea.

Struck with amaze, yet still to doubt inclin'd, 450
 He stands suspended, and explores his mind.
 What shall I do ? unhappy me ! who knows
 But other Gods intend me other woes ?
 Whoe'er thou art, I shall not blindly join
 Thy pleaded reason, but consult with mine : 455
 For

For scarce in ken appears that distant isle
 Thy voice foretells me shall conclude my toil.
 Thus then I judge; while yet the planks sustain
 The wild waves fury, here I fix'd remain :
 But when their texture to the tempest yields, 460
 I launch advent'rous on the liquid fields,
 Join to the help of Gods the strength of man,
 And take this method, since the best I can.

While thus his thoughts an anxious council hold,
 The raging God a wat'ry mountain roll'd; 465
 Like a black sheet the whelming billow spread,
 Burst o'er the float, and thunder'd on his head.
 Planks, beams, disparted fly : the scatter'd wood
 Rolls diverse, and in fragments strows the flood.
 So the rude Boreas, o'er the field new-shorn, 470
 Tosses and drives the scatter'd heaps of corn.
 And now a single beam the chief bestrides ;
 There, pois'd a while above the bounding tides,
 His limbs discomburs of the clinging vest,
 And binds the sacred cincture round his breast : 475
 Then prone on ocean in a moment flung,
 Stretch'd wide his eager arms, and shot the seas along.
 All naked now, on heaving billows laid,
 Stern Neptune ey'd him, and contemptuous said :

Go, learn'd in woes, and other woes essay : 480
 Go, wander helpless on the wat'ry way :
 Thus, thus find out the destin'd shore, and then
 (If Jove ordains it) mix with happier men.
 Whate'er thy fate, the ills our wrath could raise
 Shall last remember'd in thy best of days. 485

This said, his sea-green steeds divide the foam,
 And reach high Ægæ and the tow'ry dome.

Now, scarce withdrawn the fierce earth shaking pow'r,
 Jove's daughter Pallas watch'd the fav'ring hour ;
 Back to their caves she bade the winds to fly, 490
 And hush'd the blust'ring brethren of the sky.
 The drier blasts alone of Boreas sway,
 And bear him soft on broken waves away ;
 With gentle force impelling to that shore,
 Where fate has destin'd he shall toil no more. 495

And now two nights, and now two days were past,
 Since wide he wander'd on the wat'ry waste ;
 Heav'd on the surge with intermitting breath,
 And hourly panting in the arms of death.

The third fair morn now blaz'd upon the main ; 500

Then glassy smooth lay all the liquid plain,
 The winds were hush'd, the billows scarcely curl'd,
 And a deed silence still'd the wat'ry world.

When lifted on a ridgy wave, he spies

The land at distance, and with sharpen'd eyes. 505

As pious children joy with vast delight

When a lov'd fire revives before their sight,

(Who ling'ring long, has call'd on death in vain,

Fix'd by some dæmon to his bed of pain,

Till heav'n by miracle his life restore) : 510

So joys Ulysses at th' appearing shore ;

And sees (and labours onward as he sees)

The rising forests, and the tufted trees.

And now, as near approaching as the sound

Of human voice the list'ning ear may wound, 515

Amidst the rocks he hears a hollow roar

Of murm'ring surges breaking on the shore :

Nor peaceful port was there, nor winding bay,

To shield the vessel from the rolling sea,

But cliffs, and shaggy shores, a dreadful sight ! 520

All-rough with rocks, with foamy billows white.

Fear seiz'd his slacken'd limbs and beating heart,

As thus he commun'd with his soul apart.

Ah me ! when o'er a length of waters tost,

These eyes at last behold th' unhop'd-for coast, 525

No port receives me from the angry main,

But the loud deeps demand me back again.

Above, sharp rocks forbid access ; around

Roar the wild waves ; beneath, is sea profound !

No footing sure affords the faithless sand, 530

To stem too rapid, and too deep to stand.

If here I enter, my efforts are vain,

Dash'd on the cliffs, or heav'd into the main ;

Or round the island if my course I bend,

Where the ports open, or the shores descend, 535

Back

Book V. HOMER's ODYSSEY. 91

Back to the seas the rolling surge may sweep,
And bury all my hopes beneath the deep ;
Or some enormous whale the God may send,
(For many such on Amphitrite attend).
Too well the turns of mortal chance I know, 540
And hate relentless of my heav'nly foe.

While thus he thought, a monstrous wave up-bore
The chief, and dash'd him on the craggy shore :
Torn was his skin, nor had the ribs been whole,
But instant Pallas enter'd in his soul. 545

Close to the cliff with both his hands he clung,
And stuck adherent, and suspended hung ;
Till the huge surge roll'd off : then backward sweep
The reflux tides, and plunge him in the deep.
As when the Polypos, from forth his cave 550

Torn with full force, reluctant beats the wave,
His ragged claws are stuck with stones and sands ;
So the rough rock had shagg'd Ulysses' hands.
And now had perish'd, whelm'd beneath the main,
Th' unhappy man ; ev'n fate had been in vain : 555
But all-subduing Pallas lent her pow'r,

And prudence say'd him in the needful hour.
Beyond the beating surge his course he bore,
(A wider circle, but in sight of shore),
With longing eyes, observing, to survey 560

Some smooth ascent, or safe-sequester'd bay.
Between the parting rocks at length he spy'd
A falling stream with gentler waters glide ;
Where to the seas the shelving shore declin'd,
And form'd a bay, impervious to the wind. 565
To this calm port the glad Ulysses press'd,
And hail'd the river, and its God address'd.

Whoe'er thou art, before whose stream unknown
I bend, a suppliant at thy wat'ry throne,
Here, azure king ! nor let me fly in vain 570
To thee from Neptune and the raging main.
Heav'n hears and pities hapless men like me,
For sacred ev'n to Gods is misery :
Let then thy waters give the weary rest,
And save a suppliant, and a man distress'd. 755

He

He pray'd, and straight the gentle stream subsides,
 Detains the rushing current of his tides,
 Before the wand'rer smooths the wat'ry way,
 And soft receives him from the rolling sea.
 That moment, fainting as he touch'd the shore, 580
 He dropt his sinewy arms : his knees no more
 Perform'd their office, or his weight upheld :
 His swol'n heart heav'd ; his bloated body swell'd :
 From mouth and nose the briny torrent ran ;
 And lost in lassitude lay all the man, 585
 Depriv'd of voice, of motion, and of breath ;
 The soul scarce waking, in the arms of death,
 Soon as warm life its wonted office found,
 The mindful chief Leucothea's scarf unbound ;
 Observant of her word, he turn'd aside 590
 His head, and cast it on the rolling tide.
 Behind him far, upon the purple waves,
 The waters waft it, and the nymph receives.

Now parting from the stream, Ulysses found
 A mossy bank, with pliant rushes crown'd ; 595
 The bank he press'd, and gently kiss'd the ground ;
 Where on the flow'ry herb as soft he lay,
 Thus to his soul the sage began to say.

What will ye next ordain, ye pow'rs on high !
 And yet, ah yet ! what fates are we to try ? 600
 Here by the stream, if I the night outwear,
 Thus spent already, how shall nature bear
 The dews descending, and nocturnal air ;
 Or chilly vapours, breathing from the flood
 When morning rises ? — If I take the wood, 605
 And in thick shelter of innum'rous boughs
 Enjoy the comfort gentle sleep allows ;
 Though fenc'd from cold, and though my toil be past,
 What savage beasts may wander in the waste ?
 Perhaps I yet may fall a bloody prey 610
 To prowling bears, or lions, in the way.

Thus long debating in himself he stood.
 At length he took the passage to the wood,
 Whose shady horrors on a rising brow
 Wav'd high, and frown'd upon the stream below. 615
 There

There grew two olives, closest of the grove,
With roots intwin'd, and branches interwove ;
Alike their leaves, but not alike they smil'd
With sister-fruits ; one fertile, one was wild.
Nor here the sun's meridian rays had pow'r, 620
Nor wind sharp-piercing, nor the rushing show'r ;
The verdant arch so close its texture kept :
Beneath this covert great Ulysses crept.
Of gather'd leaves an ample bed he made, 624
(Thick strown by tempest through the bow'ry shade),
Where three at least might winter's cold defy,
Though Boreas rag'd along th' inclement sky.
This store with joy the patient hero found,
And sunk amidst them, heap'd the leaves around.
As some poor peasant, fated to reside 630
Remote from neighbours in a forest wide,
Studious to save what human wants require,
In embers heap'd, preserves the seeds of fire :
Hid in dry foliage thus Ulysses lies,
Till Pallas pour'd soft slumbers on his eyes ; 635
And golden dreams (the gift of sweet repose)
Lull'd all his cares, and banish'd all his woes.

T H E
O D Y S S E Y.
B O O K VI.

T H E A R G U M E N T.

Pallas appearing in a dream to Nausicaa, (the daughter of Alcinous king of Phæacia), commands her to descend to the river, and wash the robes of state, in preparation to her nuptials. Nausicaa goes with her handmaids to the river; where, while the garments are spread on the bank, they divert themselves in sports. Their voices awake Ulysses; who, addressing himself to the princess, is by her relieved and clothed, and receives directions in what manner to apply to the king and queen of the island.

WHile thus the weary wand'rer sunk to rest,
And peaceful slumbers calm'd his anxious breast;
The martial maid from heav'n's æreal height
Swift to Phæacia wing'd her rapid flight.
In elder times the soft Phæacian train 5
In ease possess'd the wide Hyperian plain;
Till the Cyclopean race in arms arose,
A lawless nation of gigantic foes:
Then great Nausthous from Hyperia far,
Through seas retreating, from the sound of war, 10
The recreant nation to fair Scheria led,
Where never science rear'd her laurel'd head:
There, round his tribes a strength of wall he rais'd,
To heav'n the glitt'ring domes and temples blaz'd:
Just to his realms, he parted grounds from grounds, 15
And shar'd the lands, and gave the lands their bounds.

Now

Now in the silent grave the monarch lay,
And wife Alcinous held the regal sway.

To his high palace through the fields of air
The Goddess shot ; Ulysses was her care. 20
There as the night in silence roll'd away,
A heav'n of charms divine Nausicaa lay :
Through the thick gloom the shining portals blaze ;
Two nymphs the portals guard, each nymph a grace.
Light as the viewless air, the warrior-maid 25
Glides through the valves, and hovers round her head :
A fav'rite virgin's blooming form she took,
From Dymas sprung ; and thus the vision spoke.

Oh indolent ! to waste thy hours away !
And sleep'st thou, careless of the bridal day ? 30
Thy spousal ornament neglected lies ;
Arise, prepare the bridal train, arise !
A just applause the cares of dress impart,
And give soft transport to a parent's heart.
Haste, to the limpid stream direct thy way, 35
When the gay morn unveils her smiling ray :
Haste to the stream ! companion of thy care,
Lo, I thy steps attend, thy labours share.
Virgin, awake ! the marriage-hour is nigh,
See ! from their thrones thy kindred monarchs sigh ! 40
The royal car at early dawn obtain,
And order mules obedient to the rein ;
For rough the way, and distant rolls the wave,
Where their fair vests Phæacian virgins lave.
In pomp ride forth ; for pomp becomes the great, 45
And majesty derives a grace from state.

Then to the palaces of heav'n she sails,
Incumbent on the wings of wafting gales ;
The seat of Gods, the regions mild of peace,
Full joy, and calm eternity of ease. 50
There no rude winds presume to shake the skies,
No rains descend, no snowy vapours rise ;
But on immortal thrones the blest'd repose :
The firmament with living splendours glows.
Hither the Goddess wing'd th' æreal way, 55
Through heav'n's eternal gates that blaz'd with day.

Now

Now from her rosy car Aurora shed
 The dawn, and all the orient flam'd with red.
 Uprose the virgin with the morning-light,
 Obedient to the vision of the night. 60

The queen she sought : the queen her hours bestow'd
 In curious works ; the whirling spindle glow'd
 With crimson threads, while busy damsels cull
 The snowy fleece, or twist the purpled wool.
 Meanwhile Phæacia's peers in council sat ; 65
 From his high dome the king descends in state :
 Then with a filial awe the royal maid
 Approach'd him passing, and submissive said ;

Will my dread sire his ear regardful deign,
 And may his child the royal car obtain ? 70
 Say, with thy garments shall I bend my way,
 Where through the vales the mazy waters stray ?
 A dignity of dress adorns the great,
 And kings draw lustre from the robe of state.

Five sons thou hast ; three wait the bridal day ; 75
 And spotless robes become the young and gay :
 So when with praise amid the dance they shine,
 By these my cares adorn'd, that praise is mine.

Thus she : but blushes ill-restrain'd betray
 Her thoughts intentive on the bridal day : 80
 The conscious fire the dawning blush survey'd,
 And smiling, thus bespoke the blooming maid :
 My child, my darling joy ! the car receive ;
 That, and whate'er our daughter asks, we give.

Swift at the royal nod th' attending train 85
 The car prepare, the mules incessant rein.
 The blooming virgin, with dispatchful cares,
 Tunics, and stoles, and robes imperial bears.
 The queen, assiduous, to her train assigns
 The sumptuous viands, and the flav'rous wines. 90
 The train prepare a cruise of curious mold,
 A cruise of fragrance, form'd of burnish'd gold ;
 Odour divine ! whose soft refreshing streams
 Sleek the smooth skin, and scent the snowy limbs.

Now mounting the gay seat, the silken reins 95
 Shine in her hand : along the sounding plains

Swift

Swift fly the mules : nor rode the nymph alone ;
 Around, a bevy of bright damsels shone.
 They seek the cisterns where Phæacian dames
 Wash their fair garments in the limpid streams ; 100
 Where gathering into depth from falling rills,
 The lucid wave a spacious basin fills.

The mules unharnes'd range beside the main,
 Or crop the verdant herbage of the plain.

Then emulous the royal robes they lave, 105
 And plunge the vestures in the cleansing wave ;
 (The vestures cleans'd o'erspread the shelly sand,
 Their snowy lustre whitens all the strand) :

Then with a short repast relieve their toil,
 And o'er their limbs diffuse ambrosial oil : 110
 And while the robes imbibe the solar ray,

O'er the green mead the sporting virgins play ;
 (Their shining veils unbound). Along the skies
 Toss'd, and retoss'd, the ball incessant flies.
 They sport, they feast : Nausicaa lifts her voice, 115
 And warbling sweet, makes earth and heav'n rejoice.

As when o'er Erymanth Diana roves,
 Or wide Táygetus' resounding groves ;
 A sylvan train the huntress-queen surrounds,
 Her rattling quiver from her shoulder sounds : 120
 Fierce in the sport, along the mountain's brow
 They bay the boar, or chase the bounding roe ;
 High o'er the lawn, with more majestic pace,
 Above the nymphs she treads with stately grace ;
 Distinguish'd excellence the Goddess proves ; 125
 Exults Latona, as the virgin moves.

With equal grace Nausicaa trod the plain,
 And shone transcendent o'er the beauteous train.

Meantime (the care and fav'rite of the skies)
 Wrapt in embow'ring shade, Ulysses lies, 130
 His woes forgot ! But Pallas now addrest
 To break the bands of all-composing rest.

Forth from her snowy hand Nausicaa threw
 The various ball ; the ball erroneous flew,
 And swam the stream : loud shrieks the virgin train,
 And the loud shriek redoubles from the main. 136

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Wak'd by the shrilling sound, Ulysses rose,
And to the deaf woods wailing, breath'd his woes.

Ah me! on what inhospitable coast,
On what new region is Ulysses tost; 140
Possess'd by wild barbarians fierce in arms,
Or men whose bosom tender pity warms?
What sounds are these that gather from the shores?
The voice of nymphs that haunt the sylvan bow'rs,
The fair-hair'd Dryads of the shady wood, 145
Or azure daughters of the silver flood,
Or human voice? But, issuing from the shades,
Why cease I straight to learn what sound invades?

Then, where the grove with leaves umbrageous bends,
With forceful strength a branch the hero rends; 150
Around his loins the verdant cincture spreads
A wreathy foliage, and concealing shades.
As when a lion in the midnight-hours,
Beat by rude blasts, and wet with wint'ry show'rs,
Descends terrific from the mountain's brow; 155
With living flames his rolling eye-balls glow;
With conscious strength elate, he bends his way,
Majestically fierce, to seize his prey,
(The steer or stag): or with keen hunger bold
Springs o'er the fence, and dissipates the fold. 160
No less a terror, from the neighb'ring groves,
Rough from the tossing surge, Ulysses moves,
Urg'd on by want, and recent from the storms;
The brackish ooze his manly grace deforms.
Wide o'er the shore, with many a piercing cry, 165
To rocks, to caves, the frightened virgins fly;
All but the nymph: the nymph stood fix'd alone,
By Pallas arm'd with boldness not her own.
Meantime in dubious thought the king awaits,
And self-considering, as he stands, debates; 170
Distant his mournful story to declare,
Or prostrate at her knee address the pray'r.
But fearful to offend, by wisdom sway'd,
At awful distance he accosts the maid.

If from the skies a Goddess, or if earth 175
(Imperial virgin) boast thy glorious birth,

To

To thee I bend ! if in that bright disguise
 Thou visit earth, a daughter of the skies,
 Hail, Dian, hail ! the huntress of the groves
 So shines majestic, and so stately moves, 180
 So breathes an air divine ! But if thy race
 Be mortal, and this earth thy native place,
 Bless'd is the father, from whose loins you sprung,
 Bless'd is the mother at whose breast you hung,
 Bless'd are the brethren who thy blood divide, 185
 To such a miracle of charms ally'd ;
 Joyful they see applauding princes gaze,
 When stately in the dance you swim th' harmonious maze :
 But bless'd o'er all, the youth with heav'nly charms,
 Who clasps the bright perfection in his arms ! 190
 Never, I never view'd till this bless'd hour
 Such finish'd grace ! I gaze and I adore !
 Thus seems the palm with stately honours crown'd
 By Phœbus' altars ; thus o'erlooks the ground ;
 The pride of Delos. (By the Delian coast 195
 I voyag'd, leader of a warrior-host,
 But ah how chang'd ! from thence my sorrow flows ;
 O fatal voyage, source of all my woes !)
 Raptur'd I stood, and as this hour amaz'd,
 With rev'rence at the lofty wonder gaz'd : 200
 Raptur'd I stand ! for earth ne'er knew to bear
 A plant so stately, or a nymph so fair.
 Aw'd from access, I lift my suppliant hands ;
 For misery, oh queen, before thee stands !
 Twice ten tempestuous nights I roll'd, resign'd 205
 To roaring billows, and the warring wind ;
 Heav'n bade the deep to spare ! but heav'n, my foe,
 Spares only to inflict some mightier wo !
 Inur'd to cares, to death in all its forms,
 Outcast I rove, familiar with the storms ! 210
 Once more I view the face of human kind :
 Oh let soft pity touch thy gen'rous mind !
 Unconscious of what air I breathe, I stand
 Naked, defenceless, on a foreign land.
 Propitious to my wants, a vest supply, 215
 To guard the wretched from th' inclement sky :

So may the Gods who heav'n and earth controul;
 Crown the chaste wishes of thy virtuous soul,
 On thy soft hours their choicest blessings shed ;
 Bles'd with a husband be thy bridal bed ; 220
 Bles'd be thy husband with a blooming race,
 And lasting union crown your blissful days.
 The Gods, when they supremely bless, bestow
 Firm union on their favourites below :

Then envy grieves, with inly-pining hate ; 225
 The good exult, and heav'n is in our state.

To whom the nymph : O stranger, cease thy care :
 Wise is thy soul, but man is born to bear :
 Jove weighs affairs of earth in dubious scales,
 And the good suffers, while the bad prevails. 230
 Bear with a soul resign'd the will of Jove :
 Who breathes, must mourn : thy woes are from above.
 But since thou tread'st our hospitable shore,
 'Tis mine to bid the wretched grieve no more,
 To clothe the naked, and thy way to guide — 235
 Know, the Phæacian tribes this land divide ;
 From great Alcinous' royal loins I spring ;
 A happy nation, and an happy king.

Then to her maids — Why, why, ye coward train,
 These fears, this flight ? ye fear, and fly in vain. 240
 Dread ye a foe ? dismiss that idle dread ;
 'Tis death with hostile step these shores to tread :
 Safe in the love of heav'n, an ocean flows
 Around our realm, a barrier from the foes.
 'Tis ours this son of sorrow to relieve, 245
 Cheer the sad heart, nor let affliction grieve.
 By Jove the stranger and the poor are sent ;
 And what to those we give, to Jove is lent.
 Then food supply, and bathe his fainting limbs
 Where waving shades obscure the mazy streams. 250

Obedient to the call, the chief they guide
 To the calm current of the secret tide ;
 Close by the stream a royal dress they lay,
 A vest and robe, with rich embroid'ry gay :
 Then unguents in a vase of gold supply, 255
 That breath'd a fragrance through the balmy sky.

To

To them the king. No longer I detain
Your friendly care : retire, ye virgin train !
Retire, while from my weary'd limbs I lave
The foul pollution of the briny wave. 260

Ye Gods ! since this worn frame refection knew,
What scenes have I survey'd of dreadful view ?
But, nymphs, recede ! sage chastity denies
To raise the blush, or pain the modest eyes.

The nymphs withdrawn, at once into the tide 265
Active he bounds ; the flashing waves divide :

O'er all his limbs his hands the wave diffuse,
And from his locks compress the weedy ooze ;
The balmy oil, a fragrant show'r, he sheds ;
Then, dress'd, in pomp magnificently treads. 270

The warrior Goddess gives his frame to shine
With majesty enlarg'd, and air divine :

Back from his brows a length of hair unfurls,
His hyacinthine locks descend in wavy curls.
As by some artist, to whom Vulcan gives 275

His skill divine, a breathing statue lives ;
By Pallas taught, he frames the wondrous mold,
And o'er the silver pours the fusile gold :

So Pallas his heroic frame improves
With heav'nly bloom, and like a God he moves. 280

A fragrance breathes around : majestic grace
Attends his steps : th' astonish'd virgins gaze.

Soft he reclines along the murm'ring seas,
Inhaling freshness from the fanning breeze.

The wond'ring nymph his glorious port survey'd,
And to her damsels, with amazement, said : 286

Not without care divine the stranger treads
This land of joy : his steps some Godhead leads :
Would Jove destroy him, fure he had been driv'n
Far from this realm, the fav'rite isle of heav'n. 290

Late a sad spectacle of wo, he trod
The desert sands, and now he looks a God.

Oh heav'n ! in my connubial hour decree
This man my spouse, or such a spouse as he !
But haste, the viands and the bowl provide — 295

The maids the viands and the bowl supply'd :

Eager he fed, for keen his hunger rag'd,
 And with the gen'rous vintage thirst assuag'd
 Now on return her care Nausicaa bends,
 The robes resumes, the glitt'ring car ascends, 300
 Far blooming o'er the field : and as she press'd
 The splendid seat, the list'ning chief address'd.

Stranger, arise ! the sun rolls down the day :
 Lo, to the palace I direct thy way ;
 Where in high state the nobles of the land 305
 Attend my royal fire, a radiant band.

But hear, though wisdom in thy soul presides,
 Speaks from thy tongue, and ev'ry action guides ;
 Advance at distance, while I pass the plain
 Where o'er the furrows waves the golden grain : 310

Alone I reascend —— With airy mounds
 A strength of wall the guarded city bounds :
 The jutting land two ample bays divides :
 Full through the narrow mouths descend the tides :
 The spacious basins arching rocks inclose, 315

A sure defence from ev'ry storm that blows.
 Close to the bay great Neptune's fane adjoins ;
 And near, a forum flank'd with marble shines ;
 Where the bold youth, the num'rous fleets to store,
 Shape the broad sail, or smooth the taper oar : 320

For not the bow they bend, nor boast the skill
 To give the feather'd arrow wings to kill ;
 But the tall mast above the vessel rear,
 Or teach the flutt'ring sail to float in air ;
 They rush into the deep with eager joy, 325

Climb the steep surge, and through the tempest fly ;
 A proud, unpolish'd race —— To me belongs
 The care to shun the blast of slanderous tongues ;
 Lest malice, prone the virtuous to defame,
 Thus with vile censure taint my spotless name. 330

“ What stranger this, whom thus Nausicaa leads ?
 “ Heav'ns ! with what graceful majesty he treads ?
 “ Perhaps a native of some distant shore,
 “ The future consort of her bridal hour ;
 “ Or rather some descendent of the skies ; 335
 “ Won by her pray'r, th' æreal bridegroom flies.

“ Heav'n

"Heav'n on that hour its choicest influence shed,
 "That gave a foreign spouse to crown her bed!"
 "All, all the godlike worthies that adorn
 "This realm, she flies; Phæacia is her scorn." 340

And just the blame; for female innocence
 Not only flies the guilt, but shuns th' offence:
 Th' unguarded virgin, as unchaste, I blame;
 And the least freedom with the sex is shame,
 Till our consenting fires a spouse provide, 345
 And public nuptials justify the bride.

But wouldst thou soon review thy native plain,
 Attend, and speedy thou shalt pass the main:
 Nigh where a grove with verdant poplars crown'd,
 To Pallas sacred, shades the holy ground, 350
 We bend our way: a bubbling fount distils
 A lucid lake, and thence descends in rills;
 Around the grove a mead with lively green
 Falls by degrees, and forms a beauteous scene;
 Here a rich juice the royal vineyard pours; 355
 And there the garden yields a waste of flow'rs.
 Hence lies the town, as far as to the ear
 Floats a strong shout along the waves of air.
 There wait embow'r'd, while I ascend alone
 To great Alcinous on his royal throne. 360

Arriv'd, advance impatient of delay,
 And to the lofty palace bend thy way:
 The lofty palace overlooks the town,
 From ev'ry dome by pomp superior known:
 A child may point the way. With earnest gait 365
 Seek thou the queen along the rooms of state;
 Her royal hand a wondrous work designs;
 Around a circle of bright damsels shines;
 Part twist the threads, and part the wool dispose,
 While with the purple orb the spindle glows. 370
 High on a throne, amid the Scherian pow'rs,
 My royal father shares the genial hours.
 But to the queen thy mournful tale disclose,
 With the prevailing eloquence of woes:
 So shalt thou view with joy thy natal shore, 375
 Though mountains rise between, and oceans roar.

She

She added not ; but waving as she wheel'd
 The silver scourge, it glitter'd o'er the field :
 With skill the virgin guides th' embroider'd rein,
 Slow rolls the car before th' attending train. 380

Now whirling down the heav'ns, the golden day
 Shot through the western clouds a dewy ray :
 The grove they reach, where from the sacred shade
 To Pallas thus the penfive hero pray'd.

Daughter of Jove ! whose arms in thunder wield
 Th'avenging bolt, and shake the dreadful shield ; 386
 Forsook by thee, in vain I fought thy aid,
 When booming billows clos'd above my head :
 Attend, unconquer'd maid ! accord my vows,
 Bid the great hear, and pitying heal my woes. 390

This heard Minerva, but forbore to fly,
 (By Neptune aw'd), apparent from the sky ;
 Stern God ! who rag'd with vengeance unrestrain'd,
 Till great Ulysses hail'd his native land.

THE

O D Y S S E Y.

B O O K VII.

THE ARGUMENT.

The court of Alcinous.

The princess Nausicaa returns to the city, and Ulysses soon after follows thither. He is met by Pallas in the form of a young virgin, who guides him to the palace, and directs him in what manner to address the queen Arete. She then involves him in a mist, which causes him to pass invisible. The palace and gardens of Alcinous described. Ulysses falling at the feet of the queen, the mist disperses, the Phæacians admire, and receive him with respect. The queen inquiring by what means he had the garments he then wore, he relates to her and Alcinous his departure from Calypso, and his arrival on their dominions.

The same day continues, and the book ends with the night.

THE patient, heav'nly man thus suppliant pray'd ;
While the slow mules draw on th' imperial maid :
Thro' the proud street she moves, the public gaze :
The turning wheel before the palace stays.
With ready love her brothers gath'ring round, 5
Receiv'd the vestures, and the mules unbound.
She seeks the bridal bow'r : a matron there
The rising fire supplies with busy care,
Whose charms in youth her father's heart inflam'd,
Now worn with age, Eurymedusa nam'd : 10

The

The captive dame Phæacian rovers bore,
 Snatch'd from Epirus, her sweet native shore,
 (A grateful prize !), and in her bloom bestow'd
 On good Alcinous, honour'd as a God :
 Nurse of Nausicaa from her infant years,
 And tender second to a mother's cares.

15

Now from the sacred thicket where he lay,
 To town Ulysses took the winding way.
 Propitious Pallas, to secure her care,
 Around him spread a veil of thicken'd air ;
 To shun th' encounter of the vulgar croud,
 Insulting still, inquisitive and loud.

20

When near the fam'd Phæacian walls he drew,
 The beauteous city opening to his view,
 His step a virgin met, and stood before :
 A polish'd urn the seeming virgin bore,
 And youthful smil'd ; but in the low disguise
 Lay hid the Goddess with the azure eyes.

25

Show me, fair daughter, (thus the chief demands),
 The house of him who rules these happy lands.
 Through many woes and wand'rings, lo ! I come
 To good Alcinous' hospitable dome.

30

Far from my native coast, I rove alone,
 A wretched stranger, and of all unknown !

The Goddess answer'd : Father, I obey,
 And point the wand'ring traveller his way :
 Well known to me the palace you inquire,
 For fast beside it dwells my honour'd fire.

35

But silent march, nor greet the common train
 With question needless, or inquiry vain.

40

A race of rugged mariners are these ;
 Unpolish'd men, and boistrous as their seas :
 The native islanders alone their care,
 And hateful he that breathes a foreign air.

These did the ruler of the deep ordain
 To build proud navies, and command the main ;
 On canvas wings to cut the wat'ry way ;
 No bird so light, no thought so swift as they.

45

Thus having spoke, th' unknown celestial leads :
 The footsteps of the Deity he treads,

50

And

And secret moves along the crouded space,
 Unseen of all the rude Phæacian race.
 (So Pallas order'd, Pallas to their eyes
 The mist objected, and condens'd the skies.)
 The chief with wonder sees th' extended streets, 55
 The spreading harbours, and the riding fleets;
 He next their princes lofty domes admires,
 In sep'rate islands crown'd with rising spires;
 And deep intrenchments, and high walls of stone,
 That gird the city like a marble zone. 60
 At length the kingly palace-gates he view'd:
 There stopp'd the Goddess, and her speech renew'd.
 My task is done: the mansion you inquire
 Appears before you: enter, and admire.
 High-thron'd, and feasting, there thou shalt behold 65
 The sceptred rulers. Fear not, but be bold:
 A decent boldness ever meets with friends,
 Succeeds, and ev'n a stranger recommends.
 First to the queen prefer a suppliant's claim,
 Alcinous' queen, Arete is her name, 70
 The same her parents, and her pow'r the same.
 For know, from Ocean's God Nausithous sprung,
 And Peribæa, beautiful and young:
 (Eurymedon's last hope, who rul'd of old
 The race of giants, impious, proud, and bold; 75
 Perish'd the nation in unrighteous war,
 Perish'd the prince, and left this only heir;)
 Who now, by Neptune's am'rous pow'r compress'd,
 Produc'd a monarch that his people bless'd,
 Father and prince of the Phæacian name; 80
 From him Rhexenor and Alcinous came.
 The first by Phœbus' burning arrows fir'd,
 New from his nuptials, hapless youth! expir'd.
 No son surviv'd: Arete heir'd his state,
 And her Alcinous chose his royal mate. 85
 With honours yet to womankind unknown,
 This queen he graces, and divides the throne:
 In equal tenderness her sons conspire,
 And all the children emulate their fire.

When

When thro' the street she gracious deigns to move, 90
 (The public wonder, and the public love),
 The tongues of all with transport sound her praise,
 The eyes of all, as on a Goddess, gaze.
 She feels the triumph of a gen'rous breast,
 To heal divisions, to relieve th' oppress'd; 95 }
 In virtue rich ; in blessing others, bless'd.
 Go then secure, thy humble suit prefer,
 And owe thy country and thy friends to her.

With that the Goddess deign'd no longer stay,
 But o'er the world of waters wing'd her way : 100
 Forsaking Scheria's ever-pleasing shore,
 The winds to Marathon the virgin bore ;
 Thence, where proud Athens rears her tow'ry head,
 With opening streets and shining structures spread,
 She pass'd, delighted with the well-known seats ; 105
 And to Erechtheus' sacred dome retreats.

Meanwhile Ulysses at the palace waits, }
 There stops, and anxious with his soul debates,
 Fix'd in amaze before the royal gates.
 The front appear'd with radiant splendours gay, 110
 Bright as the lamp of night, or orb of day.
 The walls were massy brass : the cornice high
 Blue metals crown'd, in colours of the sky :
 Rich plates of gold the folding-doors incase ;
 The pillars silver, on a brazen base ; 115
 Silver the lintels deep-projecting o'er,
 And gold the ringlets that command the door.
 Two rows of stately dogs, on either hand,
 In sculptur'd gold and labour'd silver stand.
 These Vulcan form'd with art divine, to wait 120
 Immortal guardians at Alcinous' gate ;
 Alive each animated frame appears,
 And still to live, beyond the pow'r of years.
 Fair thrones within from space to space were rais'd,
 Where various carpets with embroid'ry blaz'd, 125
 The work of matrons : these the princes prest,
 Day following day, a long continu'd feast.
 Refulgent pedestals the walls surround,
 Which boys of gold with flaming torches crown'd ;

The

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The polish'd ore, reflecting ev'ry ray, 130
 Blaz'd on the banquets with a double day.
 Full fifty handmaids form the household train;
 Some turn the mill, or sift the golden grain;
 Some ply the loom; their busy fingers move
 Like poplar-leaves when Zephyr fans the grove. 135
 Not more renown'd the men of Scheria's isle,
 For sailing arts and all the naval toil,
 Than works of female skill their womens pride,
 The flying shuttle through the threads to guide:
 Pallas to these her double gifts imparts, 140
 Inventive genius, and industrious arts.

Close to the gates a spacious garden lies,
 From storms defended and inclement skies.
 Four acres was th' allotted space of ground,
 Fenc'd with a green inclosure all around. 145
 Tall thriving trees confess'd the fruitful mold;
 The redd'ning apple ripens here to gold;
 Here the blue fig with luscious juice o'erflows,
 With deeper red the full pomegranate glows,
 The branch here bends beneath the weighty pear, 150
 And verdant olives flourish round the year.
 The balmy spirit of the western gale
 Eternal breathes on fruits untaught to fail:
 Each dropping pear a following pear supplies,
 On apples apples, figs on figs arise: 155
 The same mild season gives the blooms to blow,
 The buds to harden, and the fruits to grow.

Here order'd vines in equal ranks appear,
 With all th' united labours of the year.
 Some to unload the fertile branches run, 160
 Some dry the black'ning clusters in the sun;
 Others to tread the liquid harvest join,
 The groaning presses foam with floods of wine.
 Here are the vines in early flow'r descry'd,
 Here grapes discolour'd on the sunny side, 165 }
 And there in autumn's riches purple dy'd.

Beds of all various herbs, for ever green,
 In beauteous order terminate the scene.

Two plenteous fountains the whole prospect crown'd; }
 This thro' the gardens leads its streams around, 170 }
 Visits each plant, and waters all the ground :
 While that in pipes beneath the palace flows,
 And thence its current on the town bestows ;
 To various use their various streams they bring,
 The people one, and one supplies the king. 175

Such were the glories which the Gods ordain'd
 To grace Alcinous, and his happy land.
 Ev'n from the chief, who men and nations knew,
 Th' unwonted scene surprise and rapture drew ;
 In pleasing thought he ran the prospect o'er, 180
 Then hasty enter'd at the lofty door.

Night now approaching, in the palace stand,
 With goblets crown'd, the rulers of the land ;
 Prepar'd for rest, and off'rings to the * God
 Who bears the virtue of the sleepy rod. 185
 Unseen he glided through the joyous croud,
 With darkness circled, and an ambient cloud.

Direct to great A'cinous' throne he came,
 And prostrate fell before th' imperial dame.
 Then from around him dropp'd the veil of night ; 190
 Sudden he shines, and manifest to sight.
 The nobles gaze, with awful fear oppress ;
 Silent they gaze, and eye the godlike guest.

Daughter of great Rhexenor ! (thus began
 Low at her knees, the much-enduring man), 195
 To thee, thy consort, and this royal train,
 To all that share the blessings of your reign,
 A suppliant bends : oh pity human wo !
 'Tis what the happy to th' unhappy owe.

A wretched exile to his country send, 200
 Long worn with griefs, and long without a friend.
 So may the Gods your better days increase,
 And all your joys descend on all your race,
 So reign for ever on your country's breast,
 Your people blessing, by your people blest ! 205

* Mercury.

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Then to the genial hearth he bow'd his face,
And humbled in the ashes took his place.
Silence ensu'd. The eldest first began,
Echeneus sage, a venerable man!
Whose well taught mind the present age surpass, 210
And join'd to that th' experience of the last.
Fit words attended on his weighty sense,
And mild persuasion flow'd in eloquence.

Oh sight (he cry'd) dishonest and unjust!
A guest, a stranger, seated in the dust! 215
To raise the lowly suppliant from the ground
Befits a monarch. Lo! the peers around
But wait thy word, the gentle guest to grace,
And seat him fair in some distinguish'd place.
Let first the herald due libation pay 220
To Jove, who guides the wand'rer on his way;
Then set the genial banquet in his view,
And give the stranger-guest a stranger's due.

His sage advice the list'ning king obeys,
He stretch'd his hand the prudent chief to raise, 225
And from his seat Laodamas remov'd,
(The monarch's offspring, and his best belov'd).
There next his side the godlike hero sat;
With stars of silver shone the bed of state.
The golden ew'r a beauteous handmaid brings, 230
Replenish'd from the cool translucent springs,
Whose polish'd vase with copious streams supplies
A silver laver, of capacious size.
The table next in regal order spread,
The glitt'ring canisters are heap'd with bread: 235
Viands of various kinds invite the taste,
Of choicest sort and flavour, rich repast!
Thus feasting high, Alcinous gave the sign,
And bade the herald pour the rosy wine.
Let all around the due libation pay 240

To Jove, who guides the wand'rer on his way.
He said. Pontonus heard the king's command;
The circling goblet moves from hand to hand:
Each drinks the juice that glads the heart of man.
Alcinous then, with aspect mild, began. 245

Princes and peers, attend ! while we impart
 To you the thoughts of no inhuman heart.
 Now pleas'd and satiate, from the social rite
 Repair we to the blessings of the night :
 But with the rising day, assembled here, 250
 Let all the elders of the land appear,
 Pious observe our hospitable laws,
 And heav'n propitiate in the stranger's cause :
 Then join'd in council, proper means explore
 Safe to transport him to the wish'd-for shore : 255
 (How distant that, imports not us to know,
 Nor weigh the labour, but relieve the wo).
 Meantime, nor harm nor anguish let him bear ;
 This interval heav'n trusts him to our care.
 But to his native land our charge resign'd, 260
 Heav'n's is his life to come, and all the woes behind.
 Then must he suffer what the fates ordain ;
 For fate has wove the thread of life with pain,
 And twins ev'n from the birth, are misery and man ! }
 But if descended from th' Olympian bow'r, 265
 Gracious approach us some immortal pow'r ;
 If in that form thou com'st a guest divine,
 Some high event the conscious Gods design.
 As yet, unbid they never grac'd our feast,
 The solemn sacrifice call'd down the guest ; 270
 Then manifest of heav'n the vision stood,
 And to our eyes familiar was the God.
 Oft with some favour'd traveller they stray,
 And shine before him all the desert way :
 With social intercourse, and face to face, 275
 The friends and guardians of our pious race.
 So near approach we their celestial kind,
 By justice, truth, and probity of mind ;
 As our dire neighbours of Cyclopean birth,
 Match in fierce wrong, the giant-sons of earth. 280
 Let no such thought (with modest grace rejoin'd
 The prudent Greek) possess the royal mind.
 Alas ! a mortal, like thyself, am I ;
 No glorious native of yon azure sky :

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In form, ah how unlike their heav'nly kind ? 285

How more inferior in the gifts of mind ?

Alas, a mortal ! most oppress'd of those

Whom fate has loaded with a weight of woes ;

By a sad train of miseries alone

Distinguish'd long, and second now to none ! 290

By heav'n's high will compell'd from shore to shore ;

With heav'n's high will prepar'd to suffer more.

What histories of toil could I declare ?

But still long-weary'd nature wants repair ;

Spent with fatigue, and shrunk with pining fast, 295

My craving bowels still require repast.

Howe'er the noble, suff'ring mind may grieve

Its load of anguish, and disdain to live ;

Necessity demands our daily bread ;

Hunger is insolent, and will be fed. 300

But finish, oh ye peers ! what you propose,

And let the morrow's dawn conclude my woes.

Pleas'd will I suffer all the Gods ordain,

To see my foil, my son, my friends, again.

That view vouchsaf'd, let instant death surprise 305

With ever-during shade these happy eyes !

Th' assembled peers with gen'ral praise approv'd

His pleaded reason, and the suit he mov'd.

Each drinks a full oblivion of his cares,

And to the gifts of balmy sleep repairs. 310

Ulysses in the regal walls alone

Remain'd : beside him, on a splendid throne,

Erinc Arete and Alcinous shone. }

The queen, on nearer view, the guest survey'd

Rob'd in the garments her own hands had made ; 315

Not without wonder seen. Then thus began,

Her words addressing to the godlike man,

Can'st thou not hither, wondrous stranger ! say,

From lands remote, and o'er a length of sea ?

Tell then whence art thou ? whence that princely air ?

And robes like these, so recent and so fair ? 321

Hard is the task, oh princess ! you impose,

(Thus sighing spoke the man of many woes),

The long, the mournful series to relate
 Of all my sorrows, sent by heav'n and fate ! 325
 Yet what you ask, attend. An island lies
 Beyond these tracks, and under other skies,
 Ogygia nam'd, in ocean's wat'ry arms :
 Where dwells Calypso, dreadful in her charms !
 Remote from Gods or men she holds her reign, 330
 Amid the terrors of the rolling main.
 Me, only me, the hand of fortune bore
 Unblest'd ! to tread that interdicted shore :
 When Jove tremendous in the fable deeps
 Launch'd his red lightning at our scatter'd ships : 335
 Then, all my fleet, and all my foll'wers lost,
 Sole on a plank, on boiling surges tost,
 Heav'n drove my wreck th' Ogygian isle to find,
 Full nine days floating to the wave and wind.
 Met by the Goddess there with open arms, 340
 She brib'd my stay with more than human charms ;
 Nay promis'd, vainly promis'd, to bestow
 Immortal life, exempt from age and wo.
 But all her blandishments successless prove,
 To banish from my breast my country's love. 345
 I stay reluctant sev'n continu'd years,
 And water her ambrosial couch with tears.
 The eighth, she voluntary moves to part,
 Or urg'd by Jove, or her own changeful heart.
 A raft was form'd to cross the surging sea ; 350
 Herself supply'd the stores and rich array ;
 And gave the gales to waft me on the way.
 In sev'nteen days appear'd your pleasing coast,
 And woody mountains half in vapours lost.
 Joy touch'd my soul : my soul was joy'd in vain, 355
 For angry Neptune rous'd the raging main ;
 The wild winds whistle, and the billows roar ;
 The splitting raft the furious tempest tore ;
 And storms vindictive intercept the shore.
 Soon as their rage subsides, the seas I brave 360
 With naked force, and shoot along the wave,
 To reach this isle : but there my hopes were lost ;
 The surge impell'd me on a craggy coast.

I chose the safer sea, and chanc'd to find
 A river's mouth impervious to the wind, 365
 And clear of rocks. I fainted by the flood ;
 Then took the shelter of the neighb'ring wood.
 'Twas night ; and cover'd in the foliage deep,
 Jove plung'd my senses in the death of sleep.
 All night I slept, oblivious of my pain : 370
 Aurora dawn'd, and Phœbus shin'd in vain :
 Nor till oblique he stop'd his ev'ning ray,
 Had Somnus dry'd the balmy dew's away.
 Then female voices from the shore I heard :
 A maid amidst them, Goddess-like, appear'd : 375
 To her I su'd, she pity'd my distress ;
 Like thee in beauty, nor in virtue less.
 Who from such youth could hope confid'rate care ?
 In youth and beauty wisdom is but rare !
 She gave me life, reliev'd with just supplies 380
 My wants, and lent these robes that strike your eyes.
 This is the truth : and oh ye pow'rs on high !
 Forbid that want should sink me to a lie.

To this the king. Our daughter but express
 Her cares imperfect to our godlike guest. 385
 Suppliant to her, since first he chose to pray,
 Why not herself did she conduct the way,
 And with her handmaids to our court convey ? }

Hero and king ! (Ulysses thus reply'd),
 Nor blame her faultless, nor suspect of pride : 390
 She bade me follow in th' attendant train ;
 But fear and rev'rence did my steps detain,
 Lest rash suspicion might alarm thy mind :
 Man's of a jealous and mistaking kind.

Far from my soul (he cry'd) the Gods efface 395
 All wrath ill-grounded, and suspicion base !
 Whate'er is honest, stranger, I approve ;
 And would to Phœbus, Pallas, and to Jove,
 Such as thou art, thy thought and mine were one,
 Nor thou unwilling to be call'd my son. 400
 In such alliance couldst thou wish to join,
 A palace stor'd with treasures should be thine.

But

But if reluctant, who shall force thy stay?
 Jove bids to set the stranger on his way,
 And ships shall wait thee with the morning-ray: 405
 Till then let slumber close thy careful eyes;
 The wakeful mariners shall watch the skies,
 And seize the moment when the breezes rise:
 Then gently waft thee to the pleasing shore,
 Where thy soul rests, and labour is no more. 410
 Far as Eubœa tho' thy country lay,
 Our ships with ease transport thee in a day.
 Thither of old, earth's * giant son to view,
 On wings of winds with Rhadamanth they flew:
 This land, from whence their morning-course begun,
 Saw them returning with the setting sun. 415
 Your eyes shall witness and confirm my tale,
 Our youth how dext'rous, and how fleet our sail,
 When justly tim'd with equal sweep they row,
 And ocean whitens in long tracks below. 420

Thus he. No word th' experienc'd man replies,
 But thus to heav'n, (and heav'nward lifts his eyes):
 O Jove! oh father! what the king accords
 Do thou make perfect! sacred be his words!
 Wide o'er the world Alcinous' glory shine! 425
 Let fame be his, and ah! my country mine!

Meantime Arete, for the hour of rest
 Ordains the fleecy couch, and cov'ring vest:
 Bids her fair train the purple quilts prepare,
 And the thick carpets spread with busy care. 430
 With torches blazing in their hands they pass,
 And finish'd all their queen's command with haste:
 Then gave the signal to the willing guest:
 He rose with pleasure, and retir'd to rest.
 There, soft extended, to the murm'ring sound 435
 Of the high porch, Ulysses sleeps profound!
 Within, releas'd from cares, Alcinous lies;
 And fast beside, were clos'd Arete's eyes.

* Tityus.

THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK VIII.

THE ARGUMENT.

Alcinous calls a council, in which it is resolved to transport Ulysses into his country. After which splendid entertainments are made, where the celebrated musician and poet Demodocus plays and sings to the guests. They next proceed to the games, the race, the wrestling, discus, &c. where Ulysses casts a prodigious length, to the admiration of all the spectators. They return again to the banquet, and Demodocus sings the loves of Mars and Venus. Ulysses, after a compliment to the poet, desires him to sing the introduction of the wooden horse into Troy; which subject provoking his tears, Alcinous inquires of his guest, his name, parentage, and fortunes.

NOW fair Aurora lifts her golden ray,
And all the ruddy orient flames with day :
Alcinous, and the chief, with dawning light,
Rose instant from the slumbers of the night ;
Then to the council-seat they bend their way, 5
And fill the shining thrones along the bay.

Meanwhile Minerva, in her guardian care,
Shoots from the starry vault through fields of air ;
In form, a herald of the king she flies
From peer to peer, and thus incessant cries. 10

Nobles and chiefs who rule Phæacia's states,
The king in council your attendance waits :

A

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A prince of grace divine your aid implores,
O'er unknown seas arriv'd from unknown shores.

She spoke, and sudden with tumultuous sounds 15
Of thronging multitudes the shore rebounds :
At once the seats they fill : and ev'ry eye
Gaz'd as before some brother of the sky.

Pallas with grace divine his form improves,
More high he treads, and more enlarg'd he moves : 20
She sheds celestial bloom, regard to draw ;
And gives a dignity of mien, to awe ;
With strength, the future prize of fame to play,
And gather all the honours of the day.

Then from his glitt'ring throne Alcinous rose : 25
Attend, (he cry'd), while we our will disclose.
Your present aid this godlike stranger craves,
Toss'd by rude tempest through a war of waves ;
Perhaps from realms that view the rising day,
Or nations subject to the western ray. 30

Then grant, what here all sons of wo obtain,
(For here affliction never pleads in vain) :
Be chosen youths prepar'd, expert to try
The vast profound, and bid the vessel fly :
Launch the tall bark, and order ev'ry oar ; 35
Then in our court indulge the genial hour.
Instant, you sailors, to this task attend ;
Swift to the palace, all ye peers, ascend ;
Let none to strangers honours due disclaim :
Be there Demodocus, the bard of fame, 40
Taught by the Gods to please, when high he sings
The vocal lay, responsive to the strings.

Thus spoke the prince : th' attending peers obey ;
In state they move ; Alcinous leads the way :
Swift to Demodocus the herald flies. 45
At once the sailors to their charge arise :
They launch the vessel, and unfurl the sails,
And stretch the swelling canvas to the gales ;
Then to the palace move : a gath'ring throng,
Youth, and white age, tumultuous pour along : 50
Now all access to the dome are fill'd ;
Eight boars, the choicest of the herd, are kill'd :

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Two beeves, twelve fatlings from the flock they bring
To crown the feast ; so wills the bounteous king.
The herald now arrives, and guides along 55
The sacred master of celestial song ;
Dear to the muse ! who gave his days to flow
With mighty blessings, mix'd with mighty wo :
With clouds of darkness quench'd his visual ray,
But gave him skill to raise the lofty lay. 60

High on a radiant throne sublime in state,
Encircled by huge multitudes, he sat :
With silver shone the throne ; his lyre well strung
To rapt'rous sounds, at hand Pontonous hung :
Before his seat a polish'd table shines, 65
And a full goblet foams with gen'rous wines :
His food a herald bore. And now they fed ;
And now the rage of craving hunger fled.

Then fir'd by all the muse, aloud he sings
The mighty deeds of demigods and kings : 70
From that fierce wrath the noble song arose,
That made Ulysses and Achilles foes :
How o'er the feast they doom the fall of Troy ;
The stern debate Atrides hears with joy :
For heav'n foretold the contest, when he trod 75
The marble threshold of the Delphic God,
Curious to learn the counsels of the sky,
Ere yet he loos'd the rage of war on Troy.

Touch'd at the song, Ulysses straight resign'd
To soft affliction all his manly mind : 80
Before his eyes the purple vest he drew,
Industrious to conceal the falling dew :
But when the music paus'd, he ceas'd to shed
The flowing tear, and rais'd his drooping head ;
And lifting to the Gods a goblet crown'd, 85
He pour'd a pure libation to the ground.

Transported with the song, the list'ning train
Again with loud applause demand the strain :
Again Ulysses veil'd his pensive head,
Again unmann'd a show'r of sorrow shed : 90
Conceal'd he wept : the king observ'd alone
The silent tear, and heard the secret groan :

Then

Then to the bard aloud ; O cease to sing,
 Dumb be thy voice, and mute th' harmonious string :
 Enough the feast has pleas'd, enough the pow'r
 Of heav'nly song has crown'd the genial hour !
 Incessant in the games your strength display ;
 Contest, ye brave, the honours of the day !
 That pleas'd th' admiring stranger may proclaim
 In distant regions the Phæacian fame. 95 100

None wield the gauntlet with so dire a sway,
 Or swifter in the race devour the way ;
 None in the leap spring with so strong a bound,
 Or firmer, in the wrestling, press the ground.
 Thus spoke the king ; th' attending peers obey : 105
 In state they move ; Alcinous leads the way :
 His golden lyre Demodocus, unstrung,
 High on a column in the palace hung ;
 And guided by a herald's guardian cares,
 Majestic to the lists of fame repairs. 110

Now swarms the populace, a countless throng :
 Youth and hoar age ; and man drives man along.
 The games begin : ambitious of the prize,
 Acronæus, Thoon, and Eretheus rise ;
 The prize Ocyalus and Pymneus claim, 115
 Anchialus and Ponteus, chiefs of fame :
 There Proreus, Nautes, Eratæus appear,
 And fam'd Amphialus, Polyneus' heir.
 Euryalus like Mars terrific rose,
 When clad in wrath he withers hosts of foes : 120
 Naubolides with grace unequall'd shone,
 Or equall'd by Laodamas alone.

With these came forth Ambasineus the strong ;
 And three brave sons from great Alcinous sprung.
 Rang'd in a line the ready racers stand, 125
 Start from the goal, and vanish o'er the strand ;
 Swift as on wings of wind upborn they fly,
 And drifts of rising dust involve the sky.
 Before the rest, what space the hinds allow
 Between the mule and ox from plough to plough, 130
 Clytæneus sprung : he wing'd the rapid way,
 And bore th' unrival'd honours of the day.

With

With fierce embrace the brawny wrestlers join ;
 The conquest, great Euryalus, is thine.
 Amphialus sprung forward with a bound, 135
 Superior in the leap, a length of ground.
 From Elatreus' strong arm the discus flies,
 And sings with unmatch'd force along the skies.
 And Laodam whirls high, with dreadful sway,
 The gloves of death, victorious in the fray. 140

While thus the peerage in the games contends,
 In act to speak, Laodamas ascends :

O friends, he cries, the stranger seems well skill'd
 To try th' illustrious labours of the field :
 I deem him brave ; then grant the brave man's claim,
 Invite the hero to his share of fame. 146
 What nervous arms he boasts ! how firm his tread !
 His limbs how turn'd ! how broad his shoulders spread !
 By age unbroke ! — but all-consuming care
 Destroys perhaps the strength that time would spare :
 Dire is the ocean, dread in all its forms ! 151
 Man must decay, when man contends with storms.

Well hast thou spoke, (Euryalus replies),
 Thine is the guest, invite him thou to rise.
 Swift at the word, advancing from the croud, 155
 He made obeisance, and thus spoke aloud.

Vouchsafes the rev'rend stranger to display
 His manly worth, and share the glorious day ?
 Father, arise ! for thee thy port proclaims
 Expert to conquer in the solemn games. 160
 To fame arise ! for what more fame can yield
 Than the swift race, or conflict of the field ?
 Steal from corroding care one transient day,
 To glory give the space thou hast to stay.
 Short is the time ; and lo ! ev'n now the gales 165
 Call thee aboard, and stretch the swelling sails.

To whom with sighs Ulysses gave reply :
 All why th' ill-suiting pastime must I try ?
 To gloomy care my thoughts alone are free ;
 All the gay sports with troubled hearts agree. 170
 Sad from my natal hour my days have ran,
 A much afflicted, much-enduring man !

Who suppliant to the king and peers, implores
A speedy voyage to his native shores.

Wide wanders, Laodam, thy erring tongue, 175
The sports of glory to the brave belong,
(Retorts Euryalus) : he boasts no claim
Among the great, unlike the sons of fame.
A wand'ring merchant he frequents the main,
Some mean seafarer in pursuit of gain ; 180
Studious of freight, in naval trade well skill'd,
But dreads th' athletic labours of the field.

Incens'd Ulysses with a frown replies,
O forward to proclaim thy soul unwise !
With partial hands the Gods their gifts dispense : 185
Some greatly think, some speak with manly sense ;
Here heav'n an elegance of form denies,
But wisdom the defect of form supplies :
This man with energy of thought controuls,
And steals with modest violence our souls ; 190
He speaks reserv'dly, but he speaks with force,
Nor can one word be chang'd but for a worse ;
In public more than mortal he appears,
And as he moves the gazing croud reveres :
While others beauteous as th' æthereal kind, 195
The nobler portion want, a knowing mind.
In outward show heav'n gives thee to excel,
But heav'n denies the praise of thinking well.
Ill bear the brave a rude ungovern'd tongue,
And, youth, my gen'rous soul resents the wrong : 200
Skill'd in heroic exercise, I claim

A post of honour with the sons of fame :
Such was my boast, while vigour crown'd my days,
Now care surrounds me, and my force decays ;
Inur'd a melancholy part to bear, 205
In scenes of death, by tempest and by war.
Yet thus by woes impair'd, no more I wave
To prove the hero.—Slander stings the brave.

Then striding forward with a furious bound,
He wrench'd a rocky fragment from the ground ; 210
By far more pond'rous, and more huge by far,
Than what Phæacia's sons discharg'd in air.

Fierce

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Fierce from his arm th' enormous load he flings ;
 Sonorous through the shaded air it flings ;
 Couch'd to the earth, tempestuous as it flies, 215
 The croud gaze upward while it cleaves the skies.
 Beyond all marks, with many a giddy round
 Down-rushing, it up-turns a hill of ground.

That instant Pallas, bursting from a cloud,
 Fix'd a distinguish'd mark, and cry'd aloud. 260

Ev'n he who sightless wants his visual ray,
 May by his touch alone award the day :
 Thy signal throw transcends the utmost bound
 Of ev'ry champion, by a length of ground :
 Securely bid the strongest of the train 225
 Arise to throw : the strongest throws in vain.

She spoke ; and momentary mounts the sky :
 The friendly voice Ulysses hears with joy ;
 Then thus aloud, (elate with decent pride).
 Rise ye Phæacians, try your force, he cry'd ; 230
 If with this throw the strongest casters vie,
 Still, further still, I bid the discus fly.

Stand forth, ye champions, who the gauntlet wield,
 Or you, the swiftest racers of the field !
 Stand forth, ye wrestlers, who these pastimes grace ! 235
 I wield the gauntlet, and I run the race.

In such heroic games I yield to none,
 Or yield to brave Laodamas alone :
 Shall I with brave Laodamas contend ?
 A friend is sacred, and I style him friend. 240

Ungen'rous were the man, and base of heart,
 Who takes the kind, and pays th' ungrateful part :
 Chiefly the man, in foreign realms confin'd,
 Base to his friend, to his own int'rest blind :
 All, all your heroes I this day defy ; 245

Give me a man, that we our might may try.
 Expert in ev'ry art, I boast the skill
 To give the feather'd arrow wings to kill ;
 Should a whole host at once discharge the bow ;
 My well-aim'd shaft with death prevents the foe : 250
 Alone superior in the field of Troy,
 Great Philoctetes taught the shaft to fly.

From all the sons of earth unrivall'd praise
 I justly claim ; but yield to better days,
 To those fam'd days when great Alcides rose, 255
 And Eurytus, who bade the Gods be foes :
 (Vain Eurytus, whose art became his crime,
 Swept from the earth, he perish'd in his prime ;
 Sudden th' irremeable way he trod,
 Who boldly durst defy the Bowyer-god). 260
 In fighting fields as far the spear I throw,
 As flies an arrow from the well-drawn bow.
 Sole in the race the contest I decline,
 Stiff are my weary joints, and I resign
 By storms and hunger worn : age well may fail, 265
 When storms and hunger both at once assail.

Abash'd, the numbers hear the godlike man,
 Till great Alcinous mildly thus began.
 Well hast thou spoke, and well thy gen'rous tongue
 With decent pride refutes a public wrong : 270
 Warm are thy words, but warm without offence ;
 Fear only fools, secure in men of sense :
 Thy worth is known. Then hear our country's claim,
 And bear to heroes our heroic fame ;
 In distant realms our glorious deeds display, 275
 Repeat them frequent in the genial day ;
 When bless'd with ease, thy woes and wand'rings end,
 Teach them thy comfort, bid thy sons attend ;
 How lov'd of Jove he crown'd our fires with praise,
 How we their offspring dignify our race. 280

Let other realms the deathful gauntlet wield,
 Or boast the glories of th' athletic field ;
 We in the course unrivall'd speed display,
 Or through cærulean billows plough the way ;
 To dress, to dance, to sing, our sole delight, 285
 The feast or bath by day, and love by night :
 Rise then, ye skill'd in measures ; let him bear
 Your fame to men that breathe a distant air ;
 And faithful say, to you the pow'rs belong
 To race, to sail, to dance, to chant the song. 290

But, herald, to the palace swift repair,
 And the soft lyre to grace our pastimes bear.

Swift

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Swift at the word, obedient to the king,
 The herald flies the tuneful lyre to bring.
 Up rose nine seniors, chosen to survey 295
 The future games, the judges of the day :
 With instant care they mark a spacious round,
 And level for the dance th' allotted ground ;
 The herald bears the lyre : intent to play,
 The bard advancing meditates the lay, 300
 Skill'd in the dance, till youths, a blooming band,
 Graceful before the heav'nly minstrel stand ;
 Light-bounding from the earth, at once they rise,
 Their feet half-viewless quiver in the skies :
 Ulysses gaz'd, astonish'd to survey 305
 The glancing splendours as their sandals play.
 Meantime the bard, alternate to the strings,
 The loves of Mars and Cytherea sings ;
 How the stern God enamour'd with her charms,
 Clasp'd the gay panting Goddess in his arms, 310
 By bribes seduc'd : and how the Sun, whose eye
 Views the broad heav'ns, disclos'd the lawless joy.
 Stung to the soul, indignant through the skies
 To his black forge vindictive Vulcan flies ;
 Arriv'd, his sinewy arms incessant place 315
 Th' eternal anvil on the massy base.
 A wondrous net he labours, to betray
 The wanton lovers, as entwin'd they lay,
 Indissolubly strong ! then instant bears
 To his immortal dome the finish'd snares. 320
 Above, below, around, with art disspread,
 The sure inclosure folds the genial bed ;
 Whose texture ev'n the search of Gods deceives,
 Thin as the filmy threads the spider weaves.
 Then, as withdrawing from the starry bow'rs, 325
 He feigns a journey to the Lemnian shores,
 His fav'rite isle ! Observant Mars descries
 His wish'd recess, and to the Goddess flies ;
 He glows, he burns : the fair-hair'd queen of love
 Descends smooth-gliding from the courts of Jove, 330
 Gay blooming in full charms : her hand he press'd
 With eager joy, and with a sigh address'd.

Come, my belov'd! and taste the soft delights :
 Come, to repose the genial bed invites :
 Thy absent spouse, neglectful of thy charms, 335
 Prefers his barb'rous Sintiars to thy arms!

Then, nothing loath, th' enamour'd fair he led,
 And sunk transported on the conscious bed.
 Down rush'd the toils, inwrapping as they lay.
 The careless lovers in their wanton play : 340
 In vain they strive, th' intangling snares deny
 (Inextricably firm) the pow'r to fly :
 Warn'd by the God who sheds the golden day,
 Stern Vulcan homeward treads the starry way :
 Arriv'd, he sees, he grieves, with rage he burns ; 345
 Full horrible he roars, his voice all heav'n returns.

O Jove, he cry'd, oh all ye pow'rs above,
 See the lewd dalliance of the queen of love !
 Me, awkward me, she scorns, and yields her charms
 To that fair lecher, the strong God of arms. 350
 If I am lame, that stain my natal hour
 By fate impos'd ; such me my parent bore :
 Why was I born ? See how the wanton lies !
 O sight tormenting to an husband's eyes !
 But yet I trust, this once ev'n Mars would fly 355
 His fair-one's arms — he thinks her, once, too nigh.
 But there remain, ye guilty, in my pow'r,
 Till Jove refunds his shameless daughter's dow'r.
 Too dear I priz'd a fair enchanting face :
 Beauty unchaste is beauty in disgrace. 360

Meanwhile the Gods the dome of Vulcan throng,
 Apollo comes, and Neptune comes along,
 With these gay Hermes trod the starry plain ;
 But modesty with-held the goddesses-train.
 All heav'n beholds, imprison'd as they lie, 365
 And unextinguish'd laughter shakes the sky.

Then mutual, thus they spoke : Behold on wrong
 Swift vengeance waits ; and art subdues the strong !
 Dwells there a God on all th' Olympian brow
 More swift than Mars, and more than Vulcan slow ? 370
 Yet Vulcan conquers, and the God of arms
 Must pay the penalty for lawless charms.

Thus

Thus serious they : but he who gilds the skies,
The gay Apollo, thus to Hermes cries :
Wouldst thou enchain'd like Mars, oh Hermes, lie,
And bear the shame like Mars, to share the joy ? 376

O envy'd shame ! (the smiling youth rejoin'd) ;
Add thrice the chains, and thrice more firmly bind ;
Gaze all ye Gods, and ev'ry Goddess-gaze,
Yet eager would I bless the sweet disgrace. 380

Loud laugh the rest, ev'n Neptune laughs aloud,
Yet sues importunate to loose the God :
And free, (he cries), oh Vulcan ! free from shame
Thy captives ; I ensure the penal claim.

Will Neptune (Vulcan then) the faithless trust ? 385
He suffers who gives surety for th' unjust :
But say, if that lewd scandal of the sky
To liberty restor'd, perfidious fly ;
Say, wilt thou bear the mulct ? He instant cries,
The mulct I bear, if Mars perfidious flies. 390

To whom appeas'd : No more I urge delay ;
When Neptune sues, my part is to obey.

Then to the snares his force the God applies ;
They burst ; and Mars to Thrace indignant flies :
To the soft Cyprian shores the Goddess moves, 395
To visit Paphos and her blooming groves,
Where to the pow'r an hundred altars rise,
And breathing odours scent the balmy skies ;
Conceal'd she bathes in consecrated bow'rs,
The graces unguents shed, ambrosial show'rs, 400
Unguents that charm the Gods ! she last assumes
Her wondrous robes ; and full the Goddess blooms.

Thus sung the bard : Ulysses hears with joy,
And loud applauses rend the vaulted sky.

Then to the sports his sons the king commands, 405
Each blooming youth before the monarch stands,
In dance unmatch'd ! A wondrous ball is brought,
(The work of Polybus, divinely wrought).
This youth with strength enormous bids it fly,
And bending backward whirls it to the sky ; 410
His brother springing with an active bound,
At distance intercepts it from the ground :

The

The ball dismiss'd, in dance they skim the strand,
 Turn and return, and scarce imprint the sand.
 Th' assembly gazes with astonish'd eyes, 415
 And sends in shouts applauses to the skies.

Then thus Ulysses : Happy king, whose name
 The brightest shines in all the rolls of fame :
 In subjects happy ! with surprise I gaze ; 419
 Thy praise was just ; their skill transcends thy praise.

Pleas'd with his people's fame the monarch hears,
 And thus benevolent accosts the peers.
 Since wisdom's sacred guidance he pursues,
 Give to the stranger-guest a stranger's dues :
 Twelve princes in our realm dominion share, 425
 O'er whom supreme, imperial pow'r I bear :
 Bring gold, a pledge of love ; a talent bring,
 A vest, a robe ; and imitate your king :
 Be swift to give ; that he this night may share
 The social feast of joy, with joy sincere. 430

And thou, Euryalus, redeem thy wrong :
 A gen'rous heart repairs a slanderous tongue.
 Th' assenting peers, obedient to the king,
 In haste their heralds send the gifts to bring.
 Then thus Euryalus : O prince, whose sway 435
 Rules this bless'd realm, repentant I obey !
 Be his this sword, whose blade of brass displays
 A ruddy gleam ; whose hilt, a silver blaze ;
 Whose ivory sheath, inwrought with curious pride,
 Adds graceful terror to the wearer's side. 440

He said, and to his hand the sword consign'd ;
 And if, he cry'd, my words affect thy mind,
 Far from thy mind those words, ye whirlwinds bear,
 And scatter them, ye storms, in empty air !
 Crown, oh ye heav'ns, with joy his peaceful hours, 445
 And grant him to his spouse and native shores !

And bless'd be thou, my friend, Ulysses cries,
 Crown him with ev'ry joy, ye fav'ring skies ;
 To thy calm hours continu'd peace afford,
 And never, never mayst thou want this sword ! 450

He said, and o'er his shoulder flung the blade.
 Now o'er the earth ascends the evening-shade :

The

The precious gifts th' illustrious heralds bear,
 And to the court th' embody'd peers repair.
 Before the queen Alcinous' sons unfold 455
 The vests, the robes, and heaps of shining gold :
 Then to the radiant thrones they move in state :
 Aloft, the king in pomp imperial sat.

Thence to the queen : O partner of our reign,
 O sole belov'd ! command thy menial train 460
 A polish'd chest and stately robes to bear,
 And healing waters for the bath prepare ;
 That bath'd, our guest may bid his sorrows cease,
 Hear the sweet song, and taste the feast in peace.
 A bowl that flames with gold, of wondrous frame, 465
 Ourselves we give, memorial of our name ;
 To raise in off'rings to almighty Jove,
 And every God that treads the courts above.

Instant the queen, observant of the king,
 Commands her train a spacious vase to bring, 470
 The spacious vase with ample streams suffice,
 Heap high the wood, and bid the flames arise.
 The flames climb round it with a fierce embrace,
 The fuming waters bubble o'er the blaze.
 Herself the chest prepares : in order roll'd 475
 The robes, the vests are rang'd, and heaps of gold :
 And adding a rich dress inwrought with art,
 A gift expressive of her bounteous heart,
 Thus spoke to Ithacus : To guard with bands
 Insolvable these gifts, thy care demands : 480
 Lest, in thy slumbers on the wat'ry main,
 The hand of rapine make our bounty vain.

Then bending with full force, around he roll'd
 A labyrinth of bands in fold on fold,
 Glor'd with Circæan art. A train attends 485
 Around the bath : the bath the king ascends :
 (Untasted joy, since that disastrous hour
 He sail'd ill-fated from Calypso's bow'r),
 Where, happy as the Gods that range the sky,
 He feasted ev'ry sense with ev'ry joy. 490
 He bathes : the damsels, with officious toil,
 Shed sweets, shed unguents, in a show'r of oil :

Then

Then o'er his limbs a gorgeous robe he spreads,
 And to the feast magnificently treads.
 Full where the dome its shining valves expands, 495
 Nausicaa blooming as a Goddess stands,
 With wond'ring eyes the hero she survey'd,
 And graceful thus began the royal maid.

Hail godlike stranger ! and when heav'n restores
 To thy fond wish thy long-expected shores, 500
 This ever grateful in remembrance bear,
 To me thou ow'st, to me, the vital air.

O royal maid ! Ulysses straight returns,
 Whose worth the splendours of thy race adorns,
 So may dread Jove (whose arm in vengeance forms 505
 The writhen bolt, and blackens heav'n with storms)
 Restore me safe, thro' weary wand'rings tost,
 To my dear country's ever-pleasing coast,
 As while the spirit in this bosom glows,
 To thee, my Goddess, I address my vows. 510
 My life, thy gift I boast ! He said, and sat,
 Fast by Alcinous, on a throne of state.

Now each partakes the feast, the wine prepares,
 Portions the food, and each his portion shares.
 The bard an herald guides : the gazing throng 515
 Pay low obeisance as he moves along :
 Beneath a sculptur'd arch he sits enthron'd,
 The peers encircling form an awful round.
 Then from the chine Ulysses carves with art
 Delicious food, an honorary part : 520

This let the master of the lyre receive,
 A pledge of love ! 'tis all a wretch can give.
 Lives there a man beneath the spacious skies,
 Who sacred honours to the bard denies ?
 The muse the bard inspires, exalts his mind ; 525
 The muse indulgent loves th' harmonious kind.

The herald to his hand the charge conveys,
 Not fond of flatt'ry, nor unpleas'd with praise.
 When now the rage of hunger was allay'd,
 Thus to the lyrist wife Ulysses said. 530
 O more than man ! thy soul the muse inspires,
 Or Phœbus animates with all his fires :

For

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For who by Phœbus uninform'd, could know
The wo of Greece, and sing so well the wo ?
Just to the tale, as present at the fray, 535

Or taught the labours of the dreadful day !
The song recalls past horrors to my eyes,
And bids proud Ilion from her ashes rise.

Once more harmonious strike the sounding string,
Th' Epæan fabric, fram'd by Pallas, sing : 540

How stern Ulysses, furious to destroy,
With latent heroes sack'd imperial Troy.

If faithful thou record the tale of fame,
The God himself inspires thy breast with flame :

And mine shall be the task, henceforth to raise, 545
In ev'ry land, thy monument of praise.

Full of the God he rais'd his lofty strain,
How the Greeks rush'd tumultuous to the main :

How blazing tents illumin'd half the skies,
While from the shores the winged navy flies : 550

How ev'n in Ilion's walls, in deathful bands,
Came the stern Greeks by Troy's assisting hands :

All Troy up-heav'd the steed ; of diff'ring mind,
Various the Trojans counsell'd ; part consign'd

The monster to the sword, part sentence gave 555
To plunge it headlong in the whelming wave ;

Th' unwise award to lodge it in the tow'rs,
An off'ring sacred to th' immortal pow'rs :

Th' unwise prevail, they lodge it in the walls,
And by the Gods decree proud Ilion falls ; 560

Destruction enters in the treach'rous wood,
And vengeful slaughter, fierce for human blood.

He sung the Greeks stern-issuing from the steed,
How Ilion burns, how all her fathers bleed :

How to thy dome, Deiphobus ! ascends 565
The Spartan king ; how Ithacus attends,

(Horrid as Mars), and how with dire alarms
He fights, subdued : for Pallas strings his arms.

Thus while he sung, Ulysses' griefs renew,
Tears bathe his cheeks, and tears the ground bedew :

As some fond matron views in mortal sight 571
Her husband falling in his country's right :

Frantic

Frantic thro' clashing swords she runs, she flies,
 As ghastly pale he groans, and faints, and dies;
 Close to his breast she grovels on the ground, 575
 And bathes with floods of tears the gaping wound;
 She cries, she shrieks; the fierce-insulting foe
 Relentless mocks her violence of wo,
 To chains condemn'd, as wildly she deplores;
 A widow, and a slave on foreign shores! 580
 So from the sluices of Ulysses' eyes
 Fast fell the tears, and sighs succeeded sighs:
 Conceal'd he griev'd: the king observ'd alone
 The silent tear, and heard the secret groan:
 Then to the bard aloud: O cease to sing, 585
 Dumb be thy voice, and mute the tuneful string:
 To ev'ry note his tears responsive flow,
 And his great heart heaves with tumultuous wo;
 Thy lay too deeply moves: then cease the lay,
 And o'er the banquet every heart be gay: 590
 This social right demands: for him the sails
 Floating in air, invite th' impelling gales:
 His are the gifts of love: the wife and good
 Receive the stranger as a brother's blood.
 But, friend, discover faithful what I crave, 595
 Artful concealment ill becomes the brave:
 Say what thy birth, and what the name you bore,
 Impos'd by parents in the natal hour?
 (For from the natal hour distinctive names,
 One common right, the great and lowly claims): 600
 Say from what city, from what regions tost,
 And what inhabitants those regions boast?
 So shalt thou instant reach the realm assign'd,
 In wondrous ships self-mov'd, instinct with mind;
 No helm secures their course, no pilot guides; 605
 Like man intelligent, they plough the tides,
 Conscious of every coast, and every bay,
 That lies beneath the sun's all-seeing ray;
 Tho' clouds and darkness veil th' encumber'd sky,
 Fearless thro' darkness and thro' clouds they fly: 610
 Tho' tempests rage, tho' rolls the swelling main,
 The seas may roll, the tempests rage in vain;

Book VIII. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 133

Ev'n the stern God that o'er the waves presides,
Safe as they pass, and safe repass the tides,
With fury burns ; while careless they convey 615
Promiscuous every guest to every bay.
These ears have heard my royal sire disclose
A dreadful story big with future woes,
How Neptune rag'd, and how, by his command,
Firm rooted in a surge a ship should stand 620
A monument of wrath : how mound on mound
Should bury these proud tow'rs beneath the ground.
But this the Gods may frustrate or fulfil,
As suits the purpose of th' eternal will.
But say thro' what waste regions hast thou stray'd, 625
What customs noted, and what coasts survey'd ?
Possess'd by wild barbarians fierce in arms,
Or men, whose bosom tender pity warms ?
Say why the fate of Troy awak'd thy cares,
Why heav'd thy bosom, and why flow'd thy tears ? 630
Just are the ways of heav'n : from heav'n proceed
The woes of man ; heav'n doom'd the Greeks to bleed,
A theme of future song ! Say then if slain
Some dear-lov'd brother press'd the Phrygian plain ?
Or bled some friend, who bore a brother's part, 635
And claim'd by merit, not by blood, the heart.

† M

T H E

T H E O D Y S S E Y.

B O O K IX.

T H E A R G U M E N T.

The adventures of the Cicons, Lotophagi, and Cyclops.

Ulysses begins the relation of his adventures; how, after the destruction of Troy, he with his companions made an incursion on the Cicons, by whom they were repulsed; and, meeting with a storm, were driven to the coast of the Lotophagi. From thence they sailed to the land of the Cyclops, whose manners and situation are particularly characterised. The giant Polyphemus and his cave described; the usage Ulysses and his companions met with there; and, lastly, the method and artifice by which he escaped.

THen thus Ulysses. Thou, whom first in sway,
As first in virtue, these thy realms obey;
How sweet the products of a peaceful reign!
The heav'n-taught poet, and enchanting strain;
The well-fill'd palace, the perpetual feast, 5
A land rejoicing, and a people blest!
How goodly seems it, ever to employ
Man's social days in union and in joy;
The plenteous board high-heap'd with cates divine,
And o'er the foaming bowl the laughing wine! 10
Amid these joys, why seeks thy mind to know
Th' unhappy series of a wand'rer's woe?
Remembrance sad! whose image to review,
Alas! must open all my wounds anew.
And oh! what first, what last shall I relate, 15
Of woes unnumber'd, sent by heav'n and fate?

Know

Book IX. HOMER's ODYSSEY. 135

Know first the man (tho' now a wretch distressed)
Who keeps thee, monarch ! for his future guest.
Behold Ulysses ! no ignoble name,
Earth sounds my wisdom, and high heav'n my fame. 20
My native soil is Ithaca the fair,

Where high Neritus waves his woods in air :
Dulichium, Samè, and Zacynthus crown'd
With shady mountains, spread their isles around.
(These to the north and night's dark regions run, 25
Those to Aurora and the rising sun).

Low lies our isle, yet blest'd in fruitful stores ;
Strong are her sons, though rocky are her shores ;
And none, ah none so lovely to my sight,
Of all the lands that heav'n o'erspreads with light ! 30

In vain Calypso long constrain'd my stay,
With sweet, reluctant, amorous delay ;
With all her charms as vainly Circe strove,
And added magic, to secure my love.
In pomps or joys, the palace or the grot, 35
My country's image never was forgot,
My absent parents rose before my sight,
And distant lay contentment and delight.

Hear then the woes which mighty Jove ordain'd
To wait my passage from the Trojan land. 40
The winds from Ilion to the Cicons' shore,
Beneath cold Ismarus, our vessels bore.
We boldly landed on the hostile place,
And sack'd the city, and destroy'd the race,
Their wives made captive, their possessions shar'd, 45
And ev'ry foldier found a like reward.

I then advis'd to fly ; not so the rest,
Who staid to revel, and prolong the feast :
The fatted sheep and fable bulls they slay,
And bowls fly round, and riot wastes the day. 50
Meantime the Cicons, to their holds retir'd,
Call on the Cicons, with new fury fir'd ;
With early morn the gather'd country swarms,
And all the continent is bright with arms ;
Thick as the budding leaves or rising flow'rs 55
O'erspread the lawn, when spring descends in show'rs :

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All expert soldiers, skill'd on foot to dare,
 Or from the bounding courser urge the war.
 Now fortune changes, (so the fates ordain) ;
 Our hour was come to taste our share of pain. 60
 Close at the ships the bloody fight began,
 Wounded they wound, and man expires on man.
 Long as the morning-sun increasing bright
 O'er heav'n's pure azure spread the growing light,
 Promiscuous death the form of war confounds, 65
 Each adverse battle gor'd with equal wounds :
 But when his ev'ning wheels o'erhung the main,
 Then conquest crown'd the fierce Ciconian train.
 Six brave companions from each ship we lost,
 The rest escape in haste, and quit the coast. 70
 With sails outspread we fly th' unequal strife,
 Sad for their loss, but joyful of our life.
 Yet as we fled, our fellows rites we pay'd,
 And thrice we call'd on each unhappy shade.

Meanwhile the God, whose hand the thunder forms, 75
 Drives clouds on clouds, and blackens heav'n with storms :
 Wide o'er the waste the rage of Boreas sweeps,
 And night rush'd headlong on the shaded deeps.
 Now here, now there, the giddy ships are born,
 And all the rattling shrouds in fragments torn. 80
 We furl'd the sail, we ply'd the lab'ring oar,
 Took down our masts, and row'd our ships to shore.
 Two tedious days and two long nights we lay,
 O'erwatch'd and batter'd in the naked bay.
 But the third morning when Aurora brings, 85
 We rear the masts, we spread the canvas wings :
 Refresh'd, and careless on the deck reclin'd,
 We sit, and trust the pilot and the wind.
 Then to my native country had I sail'd ;
 But, the cape doubled, adverse winds prevail'd. 90
 Strong was the tide, which, by the northern blast
 Impell'd, our vessels on Cythera cast.
 Nine days our fleet th' uncertain tempest bore
 Far in wide ocean, and from sight of shore :
 The tenth we touch'd, by various errors tost, 95
 The land of Lotos, and the flow'ry coast.

We

Book IX. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 137

We climb'd the beach, and springs of water found,
Then spread our hasty banquet on the ground.
Three men were sent, deputed from the crew,
(An herald one), the dubious coast to view, 100
And learn what habitants possess'd the place.

They went, and found a hospitable race ;
Not prone to ill, nor strange to foreign guest,
They eat, they drink, and nature gives the feast ;
The trees around them all their fruit produce, 105
Lotos, the name ; divine, nectareous juice !
(Thence call'd Lotophagi) ; which whoso tastes,
Insatiate riots in the sweet repasts,

Nor other home nor other care intends,
But quits his house, his country, and his friends. 110
The three we sent, from off th' enchanting ground
We dragg'd reluctant, and by force we bound :
The rest in haste forsook the pleasing shore,
Or, the charm tasted, had return'd no more.

Now plac'd in order on their banks, they sweep 115
The sea's smooth face, and cleave the hoary deep ;
With heavy hearts we labour through the tide,
To coasts unknown, and oceans yet untry'd.

The land of Cyclops first ; a savage kind,
Nor tam'd by manners, nor by laws confin'd : 120
Untaught to plant, to turn the glebe, and sow,
They all their products to free nature owe.
The soil untill'd a ready harvest yields,
With wheat and barley wave the golden fields,
Spontaneous wines from weighty clusters pour, 125
And Jove descends in each prolific show'r.

By these no statutes and no rights are known,
No council held, no monarch fills the throne ;
But high on hills or airy cliffs they dwell,
Or deep in caves whose entrance leads to hell. 130
Each rules his race, his neighbour not his care,
Heedless of others, to his own severe.

Oppos'd to the Cyclopean coasts, there lay
An isle, whose hills their subject fields survey ;
Its name Lachæa, crown'd with many a grove, 135
Where savage goats thro' pathless thickets rove :

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No needy mortals here, with hunger bold,
 Or wretched hunters, through the wintry cold
 Pursue their flight, but leave them safe to bound
 From hill to hill, o'er all the desert ground. 146
 Nor knows the soil to feed the fleecy care,
 Or feels the labour of the crooked share;
 But uninhabited, untill'd, unsown
 It lies, and breeds the bleating goat alone.
 For there no vessel with vermilion prore, 145
 Or bark of traffic, glides from shore to shore;
 The rugged race of savages, unskill'd
 The seas to traverse, or the ships to build,
 Gaze on the coast, nor cultivate the soil;
 Unlearn'd in all th' industrious arts of toil. 150
 Yet here all products and all plants abound,
 Sprung from the fruitful genius of the ground;
 Fields waving high with heavy crops are seen,
 And vines that flourish in eternal green,
 Refreshing meads along the murm'ring main, 155
 And fountains streaming down the fruitful plain.
 A port there is, inclos'd on either side,
 Where ships may rest, unanchor'd and unty'd;
 Till the glad mariners incline to sail,
 And the sea whitens with the rising gale. 160
 High at its head, from out the cavern'd rock
 In living rills a gushing fountain broke:
 Around it, and above, for ever green
 The bushing alders form'd a shady scene.
 Hither some fav'ring God, beyond our thought, 165
 Through all-surrounding shade our navy brought;
 For gloomy night descended on the main,
 Nor glimmer'd Phœbe in th' æthereal plain:
 But all unseen the clouded island lay,
 And all unseen the surge and rolling sea, 170
 Till safe we anchor'd in the shelter'd bay:
 Our sails we gather'd, cast our cables o'er,
 And slept secure along the sandy shore.
 Soon as again the rosy morning shone,
 Reveal'd the landscape and the scene unknown, 175
 With

Book IX. HOMER's ODYSSEY. 139

With wonder seiz'd we view the pleasing ground,
And walk delighted, and expatiate round.
Rous'd by the woodland nymphs, at early dawn,
The mountain-goats came bounding o'er the lawn :
In haste our fellows to the ships repair, 180

For arms and weapons of the sylvan war ;
Straight in three squadrons all our crew we part,
And bend the bow, or wing the missile dart ;
The bounteous Gods afford a copious prey,
And nine fat goats each vessel bears away : 185

The royal bark had ten. Our ships complete
We thus supply'd, (for twelve were all the fleet.)

Here, till the setting sun roll'd down the light,
We sat indulging in the genial rite.

Nor wines were wanting : those from ample jars 190
We drain'd, the prize of our Ciconian wars.

The land of Cyclops lay in prospect near ;
The voice of goats and bleating flocks we hear,
And from their mountains rising smokes appear. }
Now sunk the sun, and darkness cover'd o'er 195

The face of things : along the sea-beat shore
Sate we slept : but when the sacred dawn
Arising glitter'd o'er the dewy lawn,
I call'd my fellows, and these words address'd.

My dear associates, here indulge your rest ; 200

While, with my single ship, advent'rous I
Go forth, the manners of yon men to try ;

Whether a race unjust, of barb'rous might,
Rude, and unconscious of a stranger's right ;

Or such who harbour pity in their breast, 205
Revere the Gods, and succour the distress ?

This said, I climb'd my vessel's lofty side ;

My train obey'd me, and the ship unty'd.

In order seated on their banks, they sweep
Neptune's smooth face, and cleave the yielding deep.

When to the nearest verge of land we drew, 211
Fast by the sea a lonely cave we view,

High, and with dark'ning laurels cover'd o'er,

Where sheep and goats lay slumb'ring round the shore.
Near

Near this, a fence of marble from the rock, 215
 Brown with o'er-arching pine, and spreading oak.
 A giant-shepherd here his flock maintains
 Far from the rest, and solitary reigns,
 In shelter thick of horrid shade reclin'd ;
 And gloomy mischiefs labour in his mind. 220
 A form enormous ! far unlike the race
 Of human birth, in stature, or in face :
 As some lone mountain's monstrous growth he stood,
 Crown'd with rough thickets, and a nodding wood.
 I left my vessel at the point of land, 225
 And close to guard it gave our crew command :
 With only twelve, the boldest and the best,
 I seek th' adventure, and forsake the rest.
 Then took a goatskin fill'd with precious wine,
 The gift of Maron, of Evantheus' line, 230 }
 (The priest of Phœbus at th' Ismarian shrine.)
 In sacred shade his honour'd mansion stood,
 Amidst Apollo's consecrated wood :
 Him, and his house, heav'n mov'd my mind to save,
 And costly presents in return he gave ; 235
 Sev'n golden talents to perfection wrought,
 A silver bowl that held a copious draught,
 And twelve large vessels of unmingled wine,
 Mellifluous, undecaying, and divine !
 Which now some ages from his race conceal'd, 240
 The hoary sire in gratitude reveal'd.
 Such was the wine ; to quench whose fervent steam,
 Scarce twenty measures from the living stream
 To cool one cup suffic'd : the goblet crown'd
 Breath'd aromatic fragrances around. 245
 Of this an ample vase we heav'd aboard,
 And brought another with provisions stor'd.
 My soul foreboded I should find the bow'r
 Of some fell monster, fierce with barb'rous pow'r,
 Some rustic wretch, who liv'd in heav'n's despite, 250
 Contemning laws, and trampling on the right.
 The cave we found, but vacant all within,
 (His flock the giant tended on the green).

But

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But round the grot we gaze ; and all we view,
 In order rang'd, our admiration drew : 255
 The bending shelves with loads of cheeses prest,
 The folded flocks each sep'rate from the rest,
 (The larger here, and there the lesser lambs,
 The new-fall'n young here bleating for their dams ;
 The kid distinguish'd from the lambkin lies) : 260
 The cavern echoes with responsive cries.

Capacious chargers all around were laid,
 Full pails, and vessels of the milking trade.
 With fresh provisions hence our fleet to store
 My friends advise me, and to quit the shore ; 265
 Or drive a flock of sheep and goats away,
 Consult our safety, and put off to sea.
 Their wholesome counsel rashly I declin'd,
 Curious to view the man of monstrous kind,
 And try what social rites a savage lends : 270
 Dire rites, alas ! and fatal to my friends !

Then first a fire we kindle, and prepare
 For his return with sacrifice and pray'r.
 The loaden shelves afford us full repast.
 We sit expecting. Lo ! he comes at last. 275

Near half a forest on his back he bore,
 And cast the pond'rous burden at the door.
 It thunder'd as it fell. We trembled then,
 And sought the deep recesses of the den.
 Now driv'n before him, through the arching rock, 280
 Came tumbling, heaps on heaps, th' unnumber'd flock :
 Big-udder'd ewes, and goats of female kind,
 (The males were penn'd in outward courts behind).

Then, heav'd on high, a rock's enormous weight
 To the cave's mouth he roll'd, and clos'd the gate ; 285
 (Scarce twenty four-wheel'd cars, compact and strong,
 The massy load could bear, or roll along.)

He next betakes him to his ev'ning-cares,
 And sitting down, to milk his flocks prepares ;
 Of half their udders eases first the dams, 290
 Then to the mother's teat submits the lambs.

Half the white stream to hard'ning cheese he prest,
 And high in wicker baskets heap'd ; the rest,
 Reserv'd in bowls, supply'd his nightly feast.

His labour done, he fir'd the pile, that gave 295
A sudden blaze, and lighted all the cave.

We stand discover'd by the rising fires ;
Askance the giant glares, and thus inquires.

What are ye, guests ? on what adventure, say,
Thus far ye wander through the wat'ry way ? 300
Pirates perhaps, who seek, through seas unknown,
The lives of others, and expose your own ?

His voice like thunder through the cavern sounds :
My bold companions thrilling fear confounds,
Appall'd at sight of more than mortal man ! 305
At length, with heart recover'd, I began.

From Troy's fam'd fields, sad wand'ers o'er the main,
Behold the relics of the Grecian train !

Through various seas by various perils tost,
And forc'd by storms, unwilling, on your coast, 310
Far from our destin'd course, and native land :

Such was our fate, and such high Jove's command !

Nor what we are, besits us to disclaim,
Atrides' friends, (in arms a mighty name),

Who taught proud Troy and all her sons to bow ; 315
Victors of late, but humble suppliants now !

Low at thy knee thy succour we implore ;

Respect us, human ; and relieve us, poor.

At least some hospitable gift bestow ;

'Tis what the happy to th' unhappy owe : 320

'Tis what the Gods require : those Gods revere,

The poor and stranger are their constant care :

To Jove their cause, and their revenge belongs ;

He wanders with them, and he feels their wrongs.

Fools that ye are ! (the savage thus replies, 325

His inward fury blazing at his eyes),

Or strangers, distant far from our abodes,

To bid me rev'rence or regard the Gods.

Know then we Cyclops are, a race above

Those air-bred people, and their goat-nurs'd Jove : 330

And learn, our pow'r proceeds with thee and thine,

Not as he wills, but as ourselves incline.

But answer, the good ship that brought ye o'er,

Where lies she anchor'd ? near or off the shore ?

Thus

Book IX. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 143

Thus he. His meditated fraud I find, 335
 (Vers'd in the turns of various human kind),
 And cautious, thus : Against a dreadful rock,
 Fast by your shore the gallant vessel broke,
 Scarce with these few I 'scap'd, of all my train,
 By angry Neptune whelm'd beneath the main ; 340
 The scatter'd wreck the winds blew back again.

He answer'd with his deed. His bloody hand
 Snatch'd two, unhappy ! of my martial band,
 And dash'd like dogs against the stony floor :
 The pavement swims with brains and mingled gore. 345
 Torn limb from limb, he speeds his horrid feast,
 And fierce devours it like a mountain-beast :
 He sucks the marrow, and the blood he drains ;
 Nor entrails, flesh, nor solid bone remains.

We see the death from which we cannot move, 350
 And humbled groan beneath the hand of Jove.
 His ample maw with human carnage fill'd,
 A milky deluge next the giant swill'd ;
 Then stretch'd in length o'er half the cavern'd rock,
 Lay senseless and supine, amidst the flock. 355

To seize the time, and with a sudden wound
 To fix the slumb'ring monster to the ground,
 My soul impels me ; and in act I stand
 To draw the sword ; but wisdom held my hand.
 A deed so rash had finish'd all our fate, 360

No mortal forces from the lofty gate
 Could roll the rock. In hopeless grief we lay,
 And sigh, expecting the return of day.
 Now did the rosy-finger'd morn arise,
 And shed her sacred light along the skies. 365

He wakes, he lights the fire, he milks the dams,
 And to the mother's teats submits the lambs.
 The task thus finish'd of his morning-hours,
 Two more he snatches, murders, and devours.
 Then pleas'd and whistling, drives his flocks before ; 370
 Removes the rocky mountain from the door,
 And shuts again ; with equal ease dispos'd,
 As a light quiver's lid is op'd and clos'd.

His

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His giant-voice the echoing region fills :

His flocks, obedient, spread o'er all the hills. 375

Thus left behind, e'en in the last despair

I thought, devis'd, and Pallas heard my pray'r.

Revenge, and doubt, and caution work'd my breast ;

But this of many counsels seem'd the best :

The monster's club within the cave I spy'd, 380

A tree of stateliest growth, and yet undry'd,

Green from the wood ; of height and bulk so vast,

The largest ship might claim it for a mast.

This shorten'd of its top, I gave my train

A fathom's length, to shape it and to plain ; 385

The narrow'r end I sharpen'd to a spire ;

Whose point we harden'd with the force of fire,

And hid it in the dust that strow'd the cave.

Then to my few companions, bold and brave,

Propos'd, who first the vent'rous deed should try, 390

In the broad orbit of his monstrous eye

To plunge the brand, and twirl the pointed wood,

When slumber next should tame the man of blood.

Just as I wish'd, the lots were cast on four :

Myself the fifth. We stand and wait the hour. 395

He comes with ev'ning : all his fleecy flock

Before him march, and pour into the rock :

Not one, or male or female, stay'd behind ;

(So fortune chanc'd, or so some God design'd.)

Then heaving high the stone's unwieldy weight, 400

He roll'd it on the cave, and clos'd the gate.

First down he sits, to milk the woolly dams,

And then permits their udder to their lambs.

Next seiz'd two wretches more, and headlong cast,

Brain'd on the rock ; his second dire repast. 405

I then approach'd him reeking with their gore,

And held the brimming goblet foaming o'er :

Cyclop ! since human flesh has been thy feast,

Now drain this goblet, potent to digest :

Know hence what treasures in our ship we lost, 410

And what rich liquors other climates boast.

We to thy shore the precious freight shall bear,

If home thou send us, and vouchsafe to spare.

But

But oh ! thus furious, thirsting thus for gore,
The sons of men shall ne'er approach thy shore, 415 }
And never shalt thou taste this nectar more.

He heard, he took, and pouring down his throat
Delighted, swill'd the large luxurious draught.
More ! give me more, he cry'd : the boon be thine,
Whoe'er thou art, that bear'st celestial wine ! 420
Declare thy name ; not mortal is this juice,
Such as th' unblest'd Cyclopean climes produce,
(Though sure our vine the largest cluster yields,
And Jove's scorn'd thunder serves to drench our fields) ;
But this descended from the blest'd abodes, 425
A rill of nectar, streaming from the Gods.

He said, and greedy grasp'd the heady bowl,
Thrice drain'd, and pour'd the deluge on his soul.
His sense lay cover'd with the dozy fume ;
While thus my fraudulent speech I reassume. 430
Thy promis'd boon, O Cyclop ! now I claim,
And plead my title : No man is my name.
By that distinguish'd from my tender years,
'Tis what my parents call me, and my peers.

The giant then : Our promis'd grace receive, 435
The hospitable boon we mean to give :
When all thy wretched crew have felt my pow'r,
No man shall be the last I will devour.

He said : then nodding with the fumes of wine,
Dropt his huge head, and snoring lay supine. 440
His neck obliquely o'er his shoulders hung,
Press'd with the weight of sleep, that tames the strong !
There belch'd the mingled steams of wine and blood,
And human flesh, his indigested food.
Sudden I stir the embers, and inspire 445
With animating breath the seeds of fire ;
Each drooping spirit with bold words repair,
And urge my train the dreadful deed to dare.
The stake now glow'd beneath the burning bed,
(Green as it was), and sparkled fiery red. 450
Then forth the vengeful instrument I bring ;
With beating hearts my fellows form a ring.

Urg'd by some present god, they swift let fall
 The pointed torment on his visual ball.
 Myself above them from a rising ground 455
 Guide the sharp stake, and twirl it round and round.
 As when a shipwright stands his workmen o'er,
 Who ply the wimble, some huge beam to bore;
 Urg'd on all hands it nimbly spins about,
 The grain deep-piercing till it scoops it out: 460
 In his broad eye so whirls the fiery wood;
 From the pierc'd pupil spouts the boiling blood:
 Sing'd are his brows; the scorching lids grow black;
 The gelly bubbles, and the fibres crack.
 And as when arm'ers temper in the ford 465
 The keen-edg'd poleax, or the shining sword,
 The red-hot metal hisses in the lake,
 Thus in his eyeball hiss'd the plunging stake.
 He sends a dreadful groan: the rocks around
 Through all their inmost winding caves resound. 470
 Scar'd we receded. Forth, with frantic hand,
 He tore, and dash'd on earth the goary brand:
 Then calls the Cyclops, all that round him dwell,
 With voice like thunder, and a direful yell.
 From all their dens the one-ey'd race repair, 475
 From rifted rocks, and mountains bleak in air.
 All haste assembled, at his well known roar,
 Inquire the cause, and croud the cavern-door.

What hurts thee, Polypheme? what strange affright
 Thus breaks our slumbers, and disturbs the night? 480
 Does any mortal, in th' unguarded hour
 Of sleep, oppress thee, or by fraud or pow'r?
 Or thieves insidious the fair flock surprise?
 Thus they. The Cyclop from his den replies.

Friends, Noman kills me: Noman, in the hour 485
 Of sleep, oppresses me with fraudulent pow'r.
 "If no man hurt thee, but the hand divine
 "Inflict disease, it fits thee to resign:
 "To Jove, or to thy father Neptune pray,"
 The brethren cry'd, and instant strode away. 490

Joy touch'd my secret soul, and conscious heart,
 Pleas'd with th' effect of conduct and of art.

Mean-

Meantime the Cyclop, raging with his wound,
 Spreads his wide arms, and searches round and round :
 At last, the stone removing from the gate, 495
 With hands extended in the midst he sat ;
 And search'd each passing sheep, and felt it o'er,
 Secure to seize us ere we reach'd the door.

(Such as his shallow wit, he deem'd was mine).
 But secret I revolv'd the deep design : 500
 'Twas for our lives my lab'ring bosom wrought ;
 Each scheme I turn'd, and sharpen'd ev'ry thought :
 This way and that, I cast to save my friends,
 'Till one resolve my varying counsel ends.

Strong were the rams, with native purple fair, 505
 Well fed, and largest of the fleecy care.
 These, three and three, with oser bands we ty'd,
 (The twining bands the Cyclop's bed supply'd) ;
 The midmost bore a man ; the outward two
 Secur'd each side : so bound we all the crew. 510

One ram remain'd, the leader of the flock ;
 In his deep fleece my grasping hands I lock,
 And fast beneath, in woolly curls inwove,
 There cling implicit, and confide in Jove.
 When rosy morning glimmer'd o'er the dales, 515
 He drove to pasture all the lusty males :
 The ewes still folded, with distended thighs
 Unmilk'd, lay bleating in distressful cries.
 But heedless of those cares, with anguish stung,
 He felt their fleeces as they pass'd along, 520
 (Fool that he was) and let them safely go,
 All unsuspecting of their freight below.

The master ram at last approach'd the gate,
 Charg'd with his wool, and with Ulysses' fate.
 Him while he pass'd, the monster blind bespoke : 525
 What makes my ram the lag of all the flock ?
 First thou wert wont to crop the flow'ry mead,
 First to the field and river's bank to lead,
 And first with stately step at ev'ning-hour
 Thy fleecy fellows usher to their bow'r. 530
 Now far the last, with penfive pace and slow
 Thou mov'st, as conscious of thy master's wo !

Seest thou these lids that now unfold in vain?
 (The deed of Noman and his wicked train).
 Oh ! didst thou feel for thy afflicted lord, 535
 And would but fate the pow'r of speech afford ;
 Soon mightst thou tell me, where in secret here
 The dastard lurks, all trembling with his fear.
 Swung round and round, and dast'd from rock to rock,
 His batter'd brains should on the pavement smoke. 540
 No ease, no pleasure my sad heart receives,
 While such a monster as vile Noman lives.

The giant spoke, and thro' the hollow rock
 Dismiss'd the ram, the father of the flock.
 No sooner freed, and thro' th' inclosure past, 545
 First I release myself, my fellows last :
 Fat sheep and goats in throngs we drive before,
 And reach our vessel on the winding shore.
 With joy the sailors view their friends return'd,
 And hail as living, whom as dead they mourn'd. 550
 Big tears of transport stand in ev'ry eye :
 I check their fondness, and command to fly.
 Aboard in haste they heave the wealthy sheep,
 And snatch their oars, and rush into the deep.

Now off at sea, and from the shallows clear, 555
 As far as human voice could reach the ear ;
 With taunts the distant giant I accost,
 Hear me, oh Cyclop ! hear, ungracious host !
 'Twas on no coward, no ignoble slave,
 Thou meditat'st thy meal in yonder cave ; 560
 But one, the vengeance fated from above
 Doom'd to inflict ; the instrument of Jove.
 Thy barb'rous breach of hospitable bands,
 The God, the God revenges by my hands.

These words the Cyclop's burning rage provoke : 565
 From the tall hill he rends a pointed rock ;
 High o'er the billows flew the massy load,
 And near the ship came thund'ring on the flood.
 It almost brush'd the helm, and fell before :
 The whole sea shook, and resluent beat the shore. 570
 The strong concussion on the heaving tide
 Roll'd back the vessel to the island's side :

Again

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Again I shov'd her off ; our fate to fly,
 Each nerve we stretch, and ev'ry oar we ply.
 Just 'scap'd impending death, when now again 575
 We twice as far had furrow'd back the main,
 Once more I raise my voice ; my friends afraid
 With mild entreaties my design dissuade.
 What boots the godless giant to provoke,
 Whose arm may sink us at a single stroke ? 580
 Already, when the dreadful rock he threw,
 Old Ocean shook, and back his surges flew.
 The sounding voice directs his aim again ;
 The rock o'erwhelms us, and we 'scap'd in vain.
 But I, of mind elate, and scorning fear, 585
 Thus with new taunts insult the monster's ear.
 Cyclop ! if any, pitying thy disgrace,
 Ask who disfigur'd thus that eyeless face ?
 Say 'twas Ulysses ; 'twas his deed, declare,
 Laertes' son, of Ithaca the fair ; 590
 Ulysses, far in fighting fields renown'd,
 Before whose arm Troy tumbled to the ground.
 Th' astonish'd savage with a roar replies.
 Oh heav'ns ! oh faith of ancient prophecies !
 This, Telemus Eurymedes foretold, 595
 (The mighty seer who on these hills grew old ;
 Skill'd the dark fates of mortals to declare,
 And learn'd in all wing'd omens of the air) ;
 Long since he menac'd, such was Fate's command ;
 And nam'd Ulysses as the destin'd hand. 600
 I deem'd some godlike giant to behold,
 Or lofty hero, haughty, brave, and bold ;
 Not this weak pigmy-wretch, of mean design,
 Who not by strength subdu'd me, but by wine.
 But come, accept our gifts, and join to pray 605
 Great Neptune's blessing on the wat'ry way :
 For his I am, and I the lineage own :
 Th' immortal father no less boasts the son.
 His pow'r can heal me, and relight my eye ;
 And only his, of all the Gods on high. 610
 Oh ! could this arm (I thus aloud rejoin'd)
 From that vast bulk dislodge thy bloody mind,

And send thee howling to the realms of night,
As sure, as Neptune cannot give thee sight !

Thus I : while raging he repeats his cries, 615

With hands uplifted to the starry skies :

Hear me, Oh Neptune ! thou whose arms are hurl'd
From shore to shore, and gird the solid world.

If thine I am, nor thou my birth disown,

And if th' unhappy Cyclop be thy son ; 620

Let not Ulysses breathe his native air,

Laertes' son, of Ithaca the fair.

If to review his country be his fate,

Be it thro' toils and suff'rings, long and late,

His lost companions let him first deplore ; 625

Some vessel, not his own, transport him o'er ;

And when at home from foreign suff'rings freed,

More near and deep, domestic woes succeed !

With imprecations thus he fill'd the air,

And angry Neptune heard th' unrighteous pray'r. 630

A larger rock then heaving from the plain,

He whirl'd it round : it sung across the main :

It fell, and brush'd the stern : the billows roar,

Shake at the weight, and reflux beat the shore.

With all our force we kept aloof to sea, 635

And gain'd the island where our vessels lay.

Our sight the whole collected navy cheer'd,

Who, waiting long, by turns had hop'd and fear'd.

There disembarking on the green sea-side,

We land our cattle, and the spoil divide : 640

Of these due shares to ev'ry sailor fall ;

The master ram was voted mine by all :

And him (the guardian of Ulysses' fate)

With pious mind to heav'n I consecrate.

But the great God, whose thunder rends the skies, 645

Averse, beholds the smoking sacrifice ;

And sees me wand'ring still from coast to coast ;

And all my vessels, all my people, lost !

While thoughtless we indulge the genial rite,

As plenteous cates and flowing bowls invite ; 650

Till evening Phœbus roll'd away the light :

Stretch'd

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Stretch'd on the shore in careless ease we rest,
Till ruddy morning purpled o'er the east.
Then from their anchors all our ships unbind,
And mount the decks, and call the willing wind. 655
Now rang'd in order on our banks, we sweep
With hasty strokes the hoarse-resounding deep;
Blind to the future, pensive with our fears,
Glad for the living, for the dead in tears.

THE

T H E
O D Y S S E Y.
B O O K X.

T H E A R G U M E N T.

Adventures with Æolus, the Læstrigons, and Circe.

Ulysses arrives at the island of Æolus, who gives him prosperous winds, and incloses the adverse ones in a bag, which his companions untying, they are driven back again, and rejected. Then they sail to the Læstrigons, where they lose eleven ships, and, with one only remaining, proceed to the island of Circe. Eurylochus is sent first with some companions, all which, except Eurylochus, are transformed into swine. Ulysses then undertakes the adventure, and by the help of Mercury, who gives him the herb Moly, overcomes the enchantress, and procures the restoration of his men. After a year's stay with her, he prepares at her instigation for his voyage to the infernal shades.

A T length we reach'd Æolia's sea-girt shore,
Where great Hippotades the sceptre bore,
A floating isle! High-rais'd by toil divine,
Strong walls of brass the rocky coast confine.
Six blooming youths, in private grandeur bred,
And six fair daughters, grac'd the royal bed:
These sons their sisters wed, and all remain
Their parents pride, and pleasure of their reign.
All day they feast, all day the bowls flow round,
And joy and music thro' the isle resound:

5

10
At

At night each pair on splendid carpets lay,
And crown'd with love the pleasures of the day.

This happy port affords our wand'ring fleet
A month's reception, and a safe retreat.

Full oft the monarch urg'd me to relate 15

The fall of Ilion, and the Grecian fate ;

Full oft I told : at length for parting mov'd ;

The king with mighty gifts my suit approv'd.

The adverse winds in leathern bags he brac'd,

Compress'd their force, and lock'd each struggling blast :

For him the mighty sire of Gods assign'd 21

The tempest's lord, the tyrant of the wind ;

His word alone the list'ning storms obey,

To smooth the deep, or swell the foamy sea.

These in my hollow ship the monarch hung, 25

Securely fetter'd by a silver thong ;

But Zephyrus exempt, with friendly gales

He charg'd to fill, and guide the swelling sails :

Rare gift ! but oh, what gift to fools avails !

Nine prosp'rous days we ply'd the lab'ring oar ; 30

The tenth presents our welcome native shore :

The hills display the beacon's friendly light,

And rising mountains gain upon our sight.

Then first my eyes, by watchful toils oppress'd,

Comply'd to take the balmy gifts of rest ; 35

Then first my hands did from the rudder part,

(So much the love of home possess'd my heart) ;

When lo ! on board a fond debate arose ;

What rare device those vessels might inclose ?

What sum, what prize from Æolus I brought ? 40

Whilst to his neighbour each express'd his thought.

Say, whence, ye Gods, contending-nations strive

Who most shall please, who most our hero give ?

Long have his coffers groan'd with Trojan spoils ;

Whilst we, the wretched partners of his toils, 45

Reproach'd by want, our fruitless labours mourn,

And only rich in barren fame return.

Now Æolus, ye see, augments his store :

But come, my friends, these mystic gifts explore.

They

They said : and (oh curs'd fate !) the thongs unbound !
 The gushing tempest sweeps the ocean round ; 51
 Snatch'd in the whirl, the hurried navy flew,
 The ocean widen'd, and the shores withdrew.
 Rous'd from my fatal sleep, I long debate
 If still to live, or desp'rate plunge to fate : 55
 Thus doubting, prostrate on the deck I lay,
 Till all the coward thoughts of death gave way.

Meanwhile our vessels plough the liquid plain,
 And soon the known Æolian coast regain. }
 Our groans the rocks remurmur'd to the main. 60 }
 We leap'd on shore, and with a scanty feast
 Our thirst and hunger hastily repress ;
 That done, two chosen heralds straight attend
 Our second progress to my royal friend ;
 And him amidst his jovial sons we found ; 65
 The banquet streaming, and the goblets crown'd :
 There humbly stopp'd with conscious shame and awe,
 Nor nearer than the gate presum'd to draw.
 But soon his sons their well known guest descry'd,
 And starting from their couches loudly cry'd, 70
 Ulysses here ! what dæmon couldst thou meet
 To thwart thy passage and repel thy fleet ?
 Wast thou not furnish'd by our choicest care
 For Greece, for home, and all thy soul held dear ?
 Thus they : in silence long my fate I mourn'd, 75
 At length these words with accent low return'd.
 Me, lock'd in sleep, my faithless crew bereft !
 Of all the blessings of your godlike gift !
 But grant, oh grant our loss we may retrieve :
 A favour you, and you alone can give. 80

Thus I with art to move their pity try'd,
 And touch'd the youths ; but their stern fire reply'd,
 Vile wretch, begone ! this instant I command
 Thy fleet accurs'd to leave our hallow'd land.
 His baneful suit pollutes these bless'd abodes, 85
 Whose fate proclaims him hateful to the Gods.

Thus fierce he said : we fighting went our way,
 And with desponding hearts put off to sea.

The

The sailors spent with toils their folly mourn,
 But mourn in vain; no prospect of return. 90
 Six days and nights a doubtful course we steer,
 The next proud Lamos' stately tow'rs appear,
 And Læstrigonia's gates arise distinct in air. }
 The shepherd quitting here at night the plain,
 Calls, to succeed his cares, the watchful swain; 95
 But he that scorns the chains of sleep to wear,
 And adds the herdsman's to the shepherd's care,
 So near the pastures, and so short the way,
 His double toils may claim a double pay, }
 And join the labours of the night and day. 100 }

Within a long recess a bay there lies,
 Edg'd round with cliffs, high pointing to the skies ;
 The jutring shores that swell on either side
 Contract its mouth, and break the rushing tide.
 Our eager sailors seize the fair retreat, 106
 And bound within the port their crouded fleet :
 For here retir'd the sinking billows sleep,
 And smiling calmness silver'd o'er the deep.
 I only in the bay refus'd to moor,
 And fix'd, without, my haulfers to the shore. 110

From thence we climb'd a point, whose airy brow
 Commands the prospect of the plains below :
 No tracks of beasts, or signs of men we found,
 But smoky volumes rolling from the ground.
 Two with our herald thither we command, 115
 With speed to learn what men possess'd the land.
 They went, and kept the wheel's smooth beaten road
 Which to the city drew the mountain-wood ;
 When lo ! they met, beside a crystal spring,
 The daughter of Antiphates the king ; 120
 She to Artacia's silver streams came down,
 (Artacia's streams alone supply the town) :
 The damsel they approach, and ask'd what race
 The people were ? who monarch of the place ?
 With joy the maid th' unwary strangers heard, 125
 And shew'd them where the royal dome appear'd.
 They went ; but as they ent'ring saw the queen
 Of size enormous and terrific mien,

Not

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(Not yielding to some bulky mountain's height),
 A sudden horror struck their aking sight. 130
 Swift at her call her husband scour'd away
 To wreak his hunger on the destin'd prey;
 One for his food the raging glutton slew,
 But two rush'd out, and to the navy flew.
 Balk'd of his prey, the yelling monster flies, 135
 And fills the city with his hideous cries.
 A ghastly band of giants hear the roar,
 And pouring down the mountains, croud the shore.
 Fragments they rend from off the craggy brow,
 And dash the ruins on the ships below : 140
 The crackling vessels burst ; hoarse groans arise,
 And mingled horrors echo to the skies ;
 The men, like fish, they stuck upon the flood,
 And cramm'd their filthy throats with human food.
 Whilst thus their fury rages at the bay, 145
 My sword our cables cut, I call'd to weigh ;
 And charg'd my men, as they from fate would fly,
 Each nerve to strain, each bending oar to ply.
 The sailors catch the word, their oars they seize,
 And sweep with equal strokes the smoky seas ; 150
 Clear of the rocks th' impatient vessel flies ;
 Whilst in the port each wretch incumber'd dies.
 With earnest haste my frightened sailors press,
 While kindling transports glow'd at our success ;
 But the sad fate that did our friends destroy 155
 Cool'd ev'ry breast, and damp'd the rising joy.
 Now dropp'd our anchors in the Ææan bay,
 Where Circe dwelt, the daughter of the day ;
 Her mother Persè, of old Ocean's strain,
 Thus from the Sun descended, and the Main ; 160
 (From the same lineage stern Æætès came,
 The far-fam'd brother of th' inchantress dame),
 Goddess and queen, to whom the pow'rs belong
 Of dreadful magic, and commanding song.
 Some God directing, to this peaceful bay 165
 Silent we came, and melancholy lay,
 Spent and o'erwatch'd. Two days and nights roll'd on,
 And now the third succeeding morning shone.

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I climb'd a cliff, with spear and sword in hand,
 Whose ridge o'erlook'd a shady length of land; 170
 To learn if aught of mortal works appear,
 Or cheerful voice of mortal strike the ear?
 From the high point I mark'd, in distant view,
 A stream of curling smoke, ascending blue,
 And spiry tops, the tufted trees above, 175
 Of Circe's palace bosom'd in the grove.

Thither to haste, the region to explore,
 Was first my thought: but speeding back to shore
 I deem'd it best to visit first my crew,
 And send out spies the dubious coast to view. 180
 As down the hill I solitary go,

Some pow'r divine who pities human wo
 Sent a tall stag, descending from the wood,
 To cool his fervour in the crystal flood;
 Luxuriant on the wave-worn bank he lay, 185
 Stretch'd forth, and panting in the sunny ray.
 I lanch'd my spear, and with a sudden wound
 Transpierc'd his back, and fix'd him to the ground.

He falls, and mourns his fate with human cries:
 Through the wide wound the vital spirit flies. 190

I drew, and casting on the river-side
 The bloody spear, his gather'd feet I ty'd }
 With twining osiers which the bank supply'd. }
 An ell in length the pliant wisp I weav'd,
 And the huge body on my shoulders heav'd: 195
 Then leaning on the spear with both my hands,
 Upbore my load, and press'd the sinking sands
 With weighty steps, till at the ship I threw
 The welcome burden, and bespoke my crew.

Cheer up, my friends! it is not yet our fate 200
 To glide with ghosts through Pluto's gloomy gate.
 Food in the desert land, behold! is giv'n,
 Live, and enjoy the providence of heav'n.

The joyful crew survey his mighty size,
 And on the future banquet feast their eyes, 205
 As huge in length extended lay the beast;
 Then wash their hands, and hasten to the feast.

There, till the setting sun roll'd down the light,
 They sat indulging in the genial rite.
 When ev'ning rose, and darkness cover'd o'er 210
 The face of things, we slept along the shore.
 But when the rosy morning warm'd the east,
 My men I summon'd, and these words address'd.

Followers and friends, attend what I propose,
 Ye sad companions of Ulysses' woes ! 215
 We know not here what land before us lies,
 Or to what quarter now we turn our eyes,
 Or where the sun shall set, or where shall rise.
 Here let us think (if thinking be not vain)
 If any counsel, any hope remain. 220

Alas ! from yonder promontory's brow,
 I view'd the coast, a region flat and low ;
 An isle encircled with the boundless flood ;
 A length of thickets, and entangled wood.
 Some smoke I saw amid the forest rise, 225
 And all around it only seas and skies !

With broken hearts my sad companions stood,
 Mindful of Cyclops and his human food,
 And horrid Læstrigons, the men of blood. }
 Prefaging tears apace began to rain ; 230
 But tears in mortal miseries are vain.
 In equal parts I straight divide my band,
 And name a chief each party to command ;
 I led the one, and of the other side.

Appointed brave Eurylochus the guide. 235
 Then in the brazen helm the lots we throw,
 And fortune casts Eurylochus to go.
 He march'd, with twice eleven in his train :
 Pensive they march, and pensive we remain.

The palace in a woody vale they found, 240
 High rais'd of stone ; a shaded space around,
 Where mountain-wolves and brindled lions roam,
 (By magic tam'd), familiar to the dome.
 With gentle blandishment our men they meet,
 And wag their tails, and fawning lick their feet. 245
 As from some feast a man returning late,
 His faithful dogs all meet him at the gate,

Rejoicing

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Rejoicing round, some morsel to receive,
 (Such as the good man ever us'd to give) :
 Domestic thus the grisly beasts drew near ; 250
 They gaze with wonder, not unmix'd with fear.
 Now on the threshold of the dome they stood,
 And heard a voice resounding through the wood :
 Plac'd at her loom within, the Goddess sung ;
 The vaulted roofs and solid pavement rung. 255
 O'er the fair web the rising figures shine,
 Immortal labour ! worthy hands divine.
 Polites to the rest the question mov'd,
 (A gallant leader, and a man I lov'd).

What voice celestial, chanting to the loom, 260
 (Or nymph, or goddess), echoes from the room ?
 Say, shall we seek access ? With that they call ;
 And wide unfold the portals of the hall.

The Goddess rising, asks her guests to stay,
 Who blindly follow where she leads the way. 265
 Eurylochus alone of all the band,

Suspecting fraud, more prudently remain'd :
 On thrones around, with downy coverings grac'd,
 With semblance fair th' unhappy men she plac'd.
 Milk newly press'd, the sacred flour of wheat, 270
 And honey fresh, and Pramnian wines the treat :
 But venom'd was the bread, and mix'd the bowl,
 With drugs of force to darken all the soul :
 Soon in the luscious feast themselves they lost,
 And drank oblivion of their native coast. 275

Instant her circling wand the Goddess waves,
 To hogs transforms 'em, and the sty receives.
 No more was seen the human form divine ;
 Head, face, and members, bristle into swine :
 Still curs'd with sense, their minds remain alone, 280
 And their own voice affrights them when they groan.

Meanwhile the Goddess in disdain bestows
 The mast and acorn, brutal food ! and strows
 The fruits of cornel, as their feast, around ;
 Now prone and grov'ling on unsav'ry ground. 285

Eurylochus, with pensive steps and slow,
 Aghast returns ; the messenger of wo,

And bitter fate. To speak he made essay,
 In vain essay'd, nor would his tongue obey,
 His swelling heart deny'd the words their way: 290
 But speaking tears the want of words supply,
 And the full soul bursts copious from his eye.
 Affrighted, anxious for our fellows fates,
 We press to hear what sadly he relates.

We went, Ulysses! (such was thy command), 295
 Thro' the lone thicket, and the desert land.

A palace in a woody vale we found
 Brown with dark forests, and with shades around.
 A voice celestial echo'd from the dome,
 Or nymph, or Goddess, chanting to the loom. 300

Access we sought, nor was access deny'd:
 Radiant she came; the portals open'd wide:
 The Goddess mild invites the guests to stay:
 They blindly follow where she leads the way.
 I only wait behind, of all the train; 305

I waited long, and ey'd the doors in vain:
 The rest are vanish'd, none repass'd the gate;
 And not a man appears to tell their fate.

I heard, and instant o'er my shoulders flung
 The belt in which my weighty faulchion hung, 310
 (A beamy blade); then seiz'd the bended bow,
 And bade him guide the way, resolv'd to go.
 He, prostrate falling, with both hands embrac'd
 My knees, and weeping thus his suit address'd.

O king belov'd of Jove! thy servant spare, 315
 And ah, thyself the rash attempt forbear!
 Never, alas! thou never shalt return,
 Or see the wretched for whose loss we mourn.
 With what remains, from certain ruin fly,
 And save the few not fated yet to die. 320

I answer'd stern. Inglorious then remain,
 Here feast and loiter, and desert thy train.
 Alone, unfriended, will I tempt my way;
 The laws of fate compel, and I obey.

This said, and scornful turning from the shore 325
 My haughty step, I stalk'd the valley o'er.

Till

Till now approaching nigh the magic bow'r,
 Where dwelt th' enchantress skill'd in herbs of pow'r;
 A form divine forth issu'd from the wood,
 (Immortal Hermes with the golden rod), 330
 In human semblance. On his bloomy face
 Youth smil'd celestial, with each op'ning grace.
 He seiz'd my hand, and gracious thus began:
 Ah whither roam'st thou? much enduring man!
 O blind to fate! what led thy steps to rove 335
 The horrid mazes of this magic grove?
 Each friend you seek in yon inclosure lies,
 All lost their form, and habitants of sties.
 Think'st thou by wit to model their escape?
 Sooner shalt thou, a stranger to thy shape, 340
 Fall prone their equal: first thy danger know,
 Then take the antidote the Gods bestow.
 The plant I give thro' all the direful bow'r
 Shall guard thee, and avert the evil hour.
 Now hear her wicked arts. Before thy eyes 345
 The bowl shall sparkle, and the banquet rise;
 Take this, nor from the faithless feast abstain,
 For temper'd drugs and poisons shall be vain.
 Soon as she strikes her wand, and gives the word,
 Draw forth and brandish thy refulgent sword, 350
 And menace death: those menaces shall move
 Her alter'd mind to blandishment and love.
 Nor shun the blessing proffer'd to thy arms,
 Ascend her bed, and taste celestial charms:
 So shall thy tedious toils a respite find, 355
 And thy lost friends return to human kind.
 But swear her first by those dread oaths that tie
 The pow'rs below, the blessed in the sky;
 Left to thee naked secret fraud be meant,
 Or magic bind thee, cold and impotent. 360
 Thus while he spoke, the sov'reign plant he drew,
 Where on th' all-bearing earth unmark'd it grew,
 And shew'd its nature and its wondrous power:
 Black was the root, but milky white the flow'r;
 Moly the name, to mortals hard to find, 365
 But all is easy to th' æthereal kind.

This Hermes gave, then gliding off the glade
Shot to Olympus from the woodland shade.

While full of thought, revolving fates to come,
I speed my passage to th' enchanted dome : 370

Arriv'd, before the lofty gates I stay'd :
The lofty gates the Goddess wide display'd ;
She leads before, and to the feast invites ;
I follow sadly to the magic rites.

Radiant with starry studs, a silver seat 375
Receiv'd my limbs ; a footstool eas'd my feet.
She mix'd the potion, fraudulent of soul ;
The poison manied in the golden bowl.

I took, and quaff'd it, confident in heav'n :
Then wav'd the wand, and then the word was giv'n.
Hence, to thy fellows ! (dreadful she began), 381
Go, be a beast ! — I heard, and yet was man.

Then sudden whirling, like a waving flame,
My beamy faulchion, I assault the dame.
Struck with unusual fear, she trembling cries, 385
She faints, she falls ; she lifts her weeping eyes.

What art thou ? say ! from whence, from whom you
O more than human ! tell thy race, thy name. [came ?
Amazing strength, these poisons to sustain !
Not mortal thou, nor mortal is thy brain. 390

Or art thou he, the man to come, (foretold
By Hermes pow'rful with the wand of gold),
The man from Troy, who wander'd ocean round ;
The man for wisdom's various arts renown'd,
Ulysses ? oh ! thy threat'ning fury cease, 395
Sheath thy bright sword, and join our hands in peace ;
Let mutual joys our mutual trust combine,
And love and love-born confidence be thine.

And how, dread Circe ! (furious I rejoin),
Can love and love-born confidence be mine ! 400
Beneath thy charms when my companions groan,
Transform'd to beasts, with accents not their own.
O thou of fraudulent heart ! shall I be led
To share thy feast-rites, or ascend thy bed ;
That, all unarm'd, thy vengeance may have vent, 405
And magic bind me, cold and impotent ?

Celestial

Celestial as thou art, yet stand deny'd ;
 Or swear that oath by which the Gods are ty'd,
 Swear, in thy soul no latent frauds remain,
 Swear, by the vow which never can be vain. 410

The Goddess swore : then seiz'd my hand, and led.
 To the sweet transports of the genial bed.
 Ministrant to their queen, with busy care
 Four faithful handmaids the soft rites prepare ;
 Nymphs sprung from fountains, or from shady woods,
 Or the fair offspring of the sacred floods. 416

One o'er the couches painted carpets threw,
 Whose purple lustre glow'd against the view ;
 White linen lay beneath : another plac'd
 The silver stands with golden flasks grac'd : 420
 With dulcet bev'rage this the beaker crown'd,
 Fair in the midst, with gilded cups around :
 That in the tripod o'er the kindled pile

The water pours ; the bubbling waters boil :
 An ample vase receives the smoking wave ; 425
 And, in the bath prepar'd, my limbs I lave :
 Reviving sweets repair the mind's decay,
 And take the painful sense of toil away.

A vest and tunic o'er me next she threw,
 Fresh from the bath, and dropping balmy dew ; 430
 Then led, and plac'd me on the sov'reign seat,
 With carpets spread, a footstool at my feet.
 The golden ew'r a nymph obsequious brings,
 Replenish'd from the cool translucent springs ;
 With copious water the bright vase supplies 435
 A silver laver of capacious size.

I wash'd. The table in fair order spread,
 They heap the glitt'ring canisters with bread ;
 Viands of various kinds allure the taste,
 Of choicest sort and flavour, rich repast ! 440

Circe in vain invites the feast to share ;
 Absent I ponder, and absorpt in care :
 While scenes of wo rose anxious in my breast,
 The queen beheld me, and these words address.

Why sits Ulysses silent and apart, 445
 Some hoard of grief close-harbour'd at his heart ?

Untouch'd

Untouch'd before thee stand the cates divine,
 And unregarded laughs the rosy wine.
 Can yet a doubt, or any dread remain,
 When sworn that oath which never can be vain? 455

I answer'd; Goddess, humane is thy breast,
 By justice sway'd, by tender pity prest:
 Ill fits it me, whose friends are sunk to beasts,
 To quaff thy bowls, or riot in thy feasts.
 Me wouldst thou please? for them thy cares employ,
 And them to me restore, and me to joy. 456

With that she parted: in her potent hand
 She bore the virtue of the magic wand.
 Then hast'ning to the sties, set wide the door,
 Urg'd forth, and drove the bristly herd before. 460
 Unwieldy, out they rush'd, with gen'ral cry,
 Enormous beasts! dishonest to the eye.
 Now touch'd by counter-charms, they change again,
 And stand majestic, and recall'd to men.
 Those hairs of late that bristled ev'ry part, 465
 Fall off; miraculous effect of art!

Till all the form in full proportion rise,
 More young, more large, more graceful to my eyes.
 They saw, they knew me, and with eager pace
 Clung to their master in a long embrace; 470
 Sad, pleasing sight! with tears each eye ran o'er,
 And sobs of joy re-echo'd through the bow'r:
 Ev'n Circe wept, her adamant heart
 Felt pity enter, and sustain'd her part.

Son of Laertes! (then the queen began), 475
 Oh much-enduring, much-experienc'd man!
 Hasten to thy vessel on the sea-beat shore,
 Unload thy treasures, and thy galley moor;
 Then bring thy friends, secure from future harms,
 And in our grottoes stow thy spoils and arms. 480

She said. Obedient to her high command
 I quit the place, and hasten to the strand.
 My sad companions on the beach I found,
 Their wistful eyes in floods of sorrow drown'd.
 As from fresh pastures and the dewy field 485
 (When loaded cribs their evening-banquet yield)

The

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The lowing herds return ; around them throng
 With leaps and bounds their late-imprison'd young,
 Rush to their mothers with unruly joy,
 And echoing hills return the tender cry : 490
 So round me press'd, exulting at my sight,
 With cries and agonies of wild delight,
 The weeping sailors ; nor less fierce their joy
 Than if return'd to Ithaca from Troy.

Ah master ! ever honour'd, ever dear, 495
 (These tender words on ev'ry side I hear),
 What other joy can equal thy return ?

Not that lov'd country for whose sight we mourn,
 The soil that nurs'd us, and that gave us breath :
 But ah ! relate our lost companions death. 500

I answer'd cheerful : Haste, your galley moor,
 And bring our treasures and our arms ashore :
 Those in yon hollow caverns let us lay ;
 Then rise and follow where I lead the way.
 Your fellows live : believe your eyes, and come 505
 'To taste the joys of Circe's sacred dome.

With ready speed the joyful crew obey :
 Alone Eurylochus persuades their stay.
 Whither, (he cry'd), ah whither will ye run ?
 Seek ye to meet those evils ye should shun ? 510
 Will you the terrors of the dome explore,
 In swine to grovel, or in lions roar,
 Or wolf-like howl away the midnight-hour
 In dreadful watch around the magic bow'r ?
 Remember Cyclops, and his bloody deed ; 515
 The leader's rashness made the soldiers bleed.

I heard incens'd, and first resolv'd to speed
 My flying falchion at the rebel's head.
 Dear as he was, by ties of kindred bound,
 This hand had stretch'd him breathless on the ground ;
 But all at once my interposing train 521
 For mercy pleaded, nor could plead in vain.
 Leave here the man who dares his prince desert,
 Leave to repentance and his own sad heart,
 To guard the ship. Seek we the sacred shades 525
 Of Circe's palace, where Ulysses leads.

This

This with one voice declar'd, the rising train
 Left the black vessel by the mutm'ing main.
 Shame touch'd Eurylochus's alter'd breast,
 He fear'd my threats, and follow'd with the rest. 530

Meanwhile the Goddess, with indulgent cares
 And social joys, the late transform'd repairs ;
 The bath, the feast, their fainting soul renews ;
 Rich in refulgent robes, and dropping balmy dews :
 Bright'ning with joy their eager eyes behold 535
 Each other's face, and each his story told ;
 Then gushing tears the narrative confound,
 And with their sobs the vaulted roofs resound.

When hush'd their passion, thus the Goddess cries :
 Ulysses, taught by labours to be wise, 540
 Let this short memory of grief suffice.

To me are known the various woes ye bore,
 In storms by sea, in perils on the shore ;
 Forget whatever was in fortune's pow'r,
 And share the pleasures of this genial hour. 545
 Such be your minds as e'er ye left your coast,
 Or learn'd to sorrow for a country lost.
 Exiles and wand'ers now, where-e'er ye go,
 Too faithful memory renews your wo ;
 The cause remov'd, habitual griefs remain, 550
 And the soul saddens by the use of pain.

Her kind entreaty mov'd the gen'ral breast ;
 Tir'd with long toil, we willing sunk to rest.
 We ply'd the banquet, and the bowl we crown'd,
 Till the full circle of the year came round. 555
 But when the seasons, following in their train,
 Brought back the months, the days, and hours again ;
 As from a lethargy at once they rise,
 And urge their chief with animating cries.

Is this, Ulysses, our inglorious lot ? 560
 And is the name of Ithaca forgot ?
 Shall never the dear land in prospect rise,
 Or the lov'd palace glitter in our eyes ?

Melting I heard ; yet till the sun's decline
 Prolong'd the feast, and quaff'd the rosy wine : 565
 But

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But when the shades came on at ev'ning-hour,
And all lay slumb'ring in the dusky bow'r,
I came a suppliant to fair Circe's bed,
The tender moment seiz'd, and thus I said.

Be mindful, Goddess, of thy promise made ; 570
Must sad Ulysses ever be delay'd ?

Around their lord my sad companions mourn,
Each breast beats homeward, anxious to return :
If but a moment parted from thy eyes,
Their tears fly round me, and my heart complies. 575

Go then, (she cry'd), ah go ! yet think, not I,
Not Circe, but the fates your wish deny.
Ah hope not yet to breathe thy native air !
Far other journey first demands thy care ;
To tread th' uncomfortable paths beneath, 580
And view the realms of darkness and of death.
There seek the Theban bard, depriv'd of sight,
Within irradiate with prophetic light ;
To whom Persephone, entire and whole,
Gave to retain th' unseparated soul : 585
The rest are forms, of empty æther made ;
Impassive semblance, and a sitting shade.

Struck at the word, my very heart was dead ;
Pensive I sat ; my tears bedew'd the bed ;
To hate the light and life my soul begun, 590
And saw that all was grief beneath the sun.
Compos'd at length, the gushing tears suppress'd,
And my toss'd limbs now weary'd into rest,
How shall I tread, (I cry'd), ah Circe ! say,
The dark descent ? and who shall guide the way ? 595
Can living eyes behold the realms below ?
What bark to waft me, and what wind to blow ?

Thy fated road, (the magic pow'r reply'd),
Divine Ulysses ! asks no mortal guide.
Rear but the mast, the spacious sail display, 600
The northern winds shall wing thee on thy way.
Soon shalt thou reach old Ocean's utmost ends,
Where to the main the shelving shore descends ;
The barren trees of Proserpine's black woods,
Poplars and willows trembling o'er the floods : 605

There

There fix thy vessel in the lonely bay,
 And enter there the kingdoms void of day :
 Where Phlegeton's loud torrents rushing down,
 His in the flaming gulf of Acheron ;
 And where, flow-rolling from the Stygian bed, 610
 Cocytus' lamentable waters spread :
 Where the dark rock o'erhangs th' infernal lake,
 And mingling streams eternal murmurs make.
 First draw thy faulchion, and on ev'ry side
 Trench the black earth a cubit long and wide : 615
 To all the shades around libations pour,
 And o'er th' ingredients strow the hallow'd flour :
 New wine and milk, with honey temper'd, bring,
 And living water from the crystal spring.
 Then the wan shades and feeble ghosts implore, 620
 With promis'd off'rings on thy native shore ;
 A barren cow, the stateliest of the isle,
 And, heap'd with various wealth, a blazing pile :
 These to the rest ; but to the seer must bleed
 A fable ram, the pride of all thy breed. 625
 These solemn vows and holy off'rings paid
 To all the phantom-nations of the dead ;
 Be next thy care the fable sheep to place
 Full o'er the pit, and hell-ward turn their face :
 But from th' infernal rite thine eye withdraw, 630
 And back to Ocean glance with rev'rend awe.
 Sudden shall skim along the dusky glades
 Thin airy shoals, and visionary shades.
 Then give command the sacrifice to haste,
 Let the slay'd victims in the flame be cast, 635
 And sacred vows, and mystic song, apply'd
 To grisly Pluto, and his gloomy bride.
 Wide o'er the pool, thy faulchion wav'd around
 Shall drive the spectres from forbidden ground :
 The sacred draught shall all the dead forbear, 640
 Till awful from the shades arise the seer.
 Let him, oraculous, the end, the way,
 The turns of all thy future fate display,
 Thy pilgrimage to come, and remnant of thy day.

So speaking, from the ruddy orient shone 645
 The morn conspicuous on her golden throne.
 The Goddess with a radiant tunic drest
 My limbs, and o'er me cast a silken vest.
 Long flowing robes, of purest white, array
 The nymph, that added lustre to the day : 650
 A tiar wreath'd her head with many a fold ;
 Her waist was circled with a zone of gold.
 Forth issuing then, from place to place I flew ;
 Rouse man by man, and animate my crew.
 Rise, rise, my mates ! 'tis Circe gives command : 655
 Our journey calls us ; haste, and quit the land.
 All rise and follow, yet depart not all,
 For fate decreed one wretched man to fall.

A youth there was, Elpenor was he nam'd,
 Not much for sense, nor much for courage fam'd ; 660
 The youngest of our band, a vulgar soul,
 Born but to banquet, and to drain the bowl.
 He, hot and careless, on a turret's height
 With sleep repair'd the long debauch of night :
 The sudden tumult stirr'd him where he lay, 665
 And down he hasten'd, but forgot the way ;
 Full endlong from the roof the sleeper fell,
 And snapp'd the spinal joint, and wak'd in hell.

The rest croud round me with an eager look ;
 I met them with a sigh, and thus bespoke. 670
 Already, friends ! ye think your toils are o'er ;
 Your hopes already touch your native shore :
 Alas ! far otherwise the nymph declares,
 Far other journey first demands our cares ;
 To tread th' uncomfortable paths beneath, 675
 The dreary realms of darkness and of death :
 To seek Tereias' awful shade below,
 And thence our fortunes and our fates to know.

My sad companions heard in deep despair ;
 Frantic they tore their manly growth of hair ; 680
 To earth they fell ; the tears began to rain ;
 But tears in mortals miseries are vain.
 Sadly they far'd along the sea-beat shore ;
 Still heav'd their hearts, and still their eyes ran o'er.

The ready victims at our bark we found, 685
The fable ewe, and ram, together bound.
For swift as thought, the Goddess had been there,
And thence had glided, viewless as the air:
The paths of Gods what mortal can survey?
Who eyes their motion? who shall trace their way? 690

THE

B O O K XI.

The descent into hell.

NOW to the shores we bend, a mournful train !
Climb the tall bark, and launch into the main :
At once the mast we rear, at once unbind
The spacious sheet, and stretch it to the wind :
Then pale and pensive stand, with cares oppress'd,
And solemn horror saddens ev'ry breast.
A fresh'ning breeze the magic * pow'r supply'd,
While the wing'd vessel flew along the tide ;

* Circe.

Our oars we shipp'd : all day the swelling sails
Full from the guiding pilot catch'd the gales. 10

Now sunk the sun from his aëreal height,
And o'er the shaded billows rush'd the night :
When lo ! we reach'd old Ocean's utmost bounds,
Where rocks control his waves with ever-during mounds.

There in a lonely land, and gloomy cells, 15
The dusky nation of Cimmeria dwells :
The sun ne'er views th' uncomfortable seats,
When radiant he advances, or retreats :
Unhappy race ! whom endless night invades,
Clouds the dull air, and wraps them round in shades. 20

The ship we moor on these obscure abodes ;
Disbark the sheep, an off'ring to the Gods ;
And hell-ward bending, o'er the beach descry
The doleful passage to th' infernal sky.
The victims, vow'd to each Tartarean pow'r, 25
Eurylochus and Perimedes bore.

Here open'd hell, all hell I here implor'd,
And from the scabbard drew the shining sword ;
And trenching the black earth on ev'ry side,
A cavern form'd, a cubit long and wide. 30
New wine, with honey-temper'd milk, we bring,
Then living waters from the crystal spring ;
O'er these was strew'd the consecrated flour,
And on the surface shone the holy store.

Now the wan shades we hail, th' infernal Gods, 35
To speed our course, and waft us o'er the floods :
So shall a barren heifer from the stall
Beneath the knife upon your altars fall ;
So in our palace, at our safe return,
Rich with unnumber'd gifts the pile shall burn ; 40
So shall a ram, the largest of the breed,
Black as these regions, to Tiresias bleed.

Thus solemn rites and holy vows we paid
To all the phantom nations of the dead.
Then dy'd the sheep ; a purple torrent flow'd, 45
And all the cavern smok'd with streaming blood.
When lo ! appear'd along the dusky coasts,
Thin, airy shoals of visionary ghosts.

F air,

Fair, pensive youths, and soft enamour'd maids ;
 And wither'd elders, pale and wrinkled shades ; 50
 Ghastly with wounds the forms of warriors slain
 Stalk'd with majestic port, a martial train :
 These and a thousand more swarm'd o'er the ground,
 And all the dire assembly shriek'd around.

Altonish'd at the sight, aghast I stood, 55
 And a cold fear ran shiv'ring through my blood.
 Straight I command the sacrifice to haste,
 Straight the slay'd victims to the flames are cast,
 And mutter'd vows, and mystic song apply'd
 To grisly Pluto, and his gloomy bride. 60

Now swift I wav'd my faulchion o'er the blood ;
 Back started the pale throngs, and trembling stood.
 Round the black trench the gore untasted flows,
 Till awful from the shades Tiresias rose.
 'There, wand'ring thro' the gloom I first survey'd, 65
 New to the realms of death, Elpenor's shade :
 His cold remains all naked to the sky
 On distant shores unwept, unburied lie.
 Sad at the sight I stand, deep fix'd in wo,
 And ere I spoke, the tears began to flow. 70

O say what angry pow'r Elpenor led
 To glide in shades, and wander with the dead ?
 How could thy soul, by realms and seas disjoin'd,
 Outfly the nimble sail, and leave the lagging wind ?

The ghost reply'd : To hell my doom I owe, 75
 Demons accurs'd, dire ministers of wo !
 My feet, through wine unfaithful to their weight,
 Betray'd me tumbling from a tow'ry height ;
 Stagg'ring I reel'd, and as I reel'd I fell,
 Lux'd the neck joint—my soul descends to hell. 80
 But lend me aid, I now conjure thee lend,
 By the soft tie and sacred name of friend !
 By thy fond consort ! by thy father's cares !
 By lov'd Telemachus's blooming years !
 For well I know that soon the heav'nly pow'rs 85
 Will give thee back to day, and Circe's shores :
 There pious on my cold remains attend,
 There call to mind thy poor departed friend,

The tribute of a tear is all I crave,
 And the possession of a peaceful grave. 90
 But if unheard, in vain compassion plead,
 Revere the Gods ; the Gods avenge the dead !
 A tomb along the wat'ry margin raise,
 The tomb with manly arms and trophies grace,
 To shew posterity Elpenor was. 95
 There high in air, memorial of my name,
 Fix the smooth oar, and bid me live to fame.

To whom with tears ; These rites, oh mournful shade !
 Due to thy ghost, shall to thy ghost be paid.

Still as I spoke, the phantom seem'd to moan, 100
 Tear follow'd tear, and groan succeeded groan.
 But as my waving sword the blood surrounds,
 The shade withdrew, and mutter'd empty sounds.

There as the wondrous visions I survey'd,
 All pale ascends my royal mother's shade : 105
 A queen, to Troy she saw our legions pass ;
 Now a thin form is all Anticlea was !
 Struck at the sight I melt with filial wo,
 And down my cheek the pious sorrows flow :
 Yet as I shook my falchion o'er the blood, 110
 Regardless of her son the parent stood.

When lo ! the mighty Theban I behold :
 To guide his steps he bore a staff of gold ;
 Awful he trod ! majestic was his look !
 And from his holy lips these accents broke. 115

Why, mortal, wand'rest thou from cheerful day,
 To tread the downward, melancholy way ?
 What angry Gods to these dark regions led
 Thee yet alive, companion of the dead ?
 But sheath thy poniard, while my tongue relates 120
 Heav'n's steadfast purpose, and thy future fates.

While yet he spoke, the prophet I obey'd ;
 And in the scabbard plung'd the glitt'ring blade :
 Eager he quaff'd the gore, and then exprest
 Dark things to come, the counsels of his breast. 125

Weary of light, Ulysses here explores
 A prosp'rous voyage to his native shores ;

But

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But know — by me unerring fates disclose
 New trains of dangers, and new scenes of woes ;
 I see ! I see, thy bark by Neptune tost, 130
 For injur'd Cyclops, and his eyeball lost !
 Yet to thy woes the Gods decree an end,
 If heav'n thou please ; and how to please attend !
 Where on Tinacrian rocks the ocean roars,
 Graze num'rous herds along the verdant shores ; 135
 Though hunger press, yet fly the dang'rous prey,
 The herds are sacred to the God of day,
 Who all surveys with his extensive eye
 Above, below, on earth, and in the sky !
 Rob not the God, and so propitious gales 140
 Attend thy voyage, and impel thy sails :
 But if his herds ye seize, beneath the waves
 I see thy friends o'erwhelm'd in liquid graves!
 The direful wreck Ulysses scarce survives !
 Ulysses at his country scarce arrives ! 145
 Strangers thy guides ! nor there thy labours end,
 New foes arise, domestic ills attend !
 There foul adult'ers to thy bride resort,
 And lordly gluttons riot in thy court.
 But vengeance hastens amain ! these eyes behold 150
 The deathful scene, princes on princes roll'd !
 That done, a people far from sea explore,
 Who ne'er knew salt, or heard the billows roar,
 Or saw gay vessel stem the wat'ry plain,
 A painted wonder flying on the main ! 155
 Bear on thy back an oar : with strange amaze
 A shepherd meeting thee, the oar surveys,
 And names a van : there fix it on the plain,
 To calm the God that holds the wat'ry reign ;
 A threefold off'ring to his altar bring, 160
 A bull, a ram, a boar ; and hail the Ocean king.
 But home return'd, to each æthereal pow'r
 Slay the due victim in the genial hour :
 So peaceful shalt thou end thy blissful days,
 And steal thyself from life by slow decays : 165
 Unknown to pain, in age resign thy breath,
 When late stern Neptune points the shaft with death :
 To

To the dark grove retiring as to rest,
 Thy people blessing, by thy people blest !
 Unerring truths, oh man ! my lips relate ; 170
 This is thy life to come, and this is fate.

To whom unmov'd : If this the Gods prepare,
 What heav'n ordains, the wife with courage bear.
 But say, why yonder on the lonely strands,
 Unmindful of her son, Anticlea stands ? 175
 Why to the ground she bends her downcast eye ?
 Why is she silent, while her son is nigh ?
 The latent cause, oh sacred seer, reveal !

Nor this, replies the seer, will I conceal.
 Know, to the spectres, that thy bev'rage taste, 180
 The scenes of life recur, and actions past ;
 They, seal'd with truth, return the sure reply ;
 The rest repell'd, a train oblivious, fly.

The phantom prophet ceas'd, and sunk from sight
 To the black palace of eternal night. 185

Still in the dark abodes of death I stood,
 When near Anticlea mov'd, and drank the blood.
 Straight all the mother in her soul awakes,
 And owning her Ulysses, thus she speaks.
 Com'st thou, my son, alive, to realms beneath, 190
 The doleful realms of darkness and of death ?
 Com'st thou alive from pure, æthereal day ?
 Dire is the region, dismal is the way !
 Here lakes profound, there floods oppose their waves,
 There the wide sea, with all his billows, raves ! 195
 Or (since to dust proud Troy submits her tow'rs)
 Com'st thou a wand'rer from the Phrygian shores ?
 Or say, since honour call'd thee to the field,
 Hast thou thy Ithaca, thy bride, beheld ?

Source of my life, I cry'd, from earth I fly 200
 To seek Tiresias in the nether sky,
 To learn my doom : for tofs'd from wo to wo,
 In ev'ry land Ulysses finds a foe :
 Nor have these eyes beheld my native shores,
 Since in the dust proud Troy submits her tow'rs. 205

But, when thy soul from her sweet mansion fled,
 Say, what distemper gave thee to the dead ?

Has

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Has life's fair lamp declin'd by slow decays,
Or swift expir'd it in a sudden blaze ?
Say, if my sire, good old Laertes, lives? 210
If yet Telemachus, my son, survives ?
Say, by his rule is my dominion aw'd,
Or crush'd by traitors with an iron rod ?
Say, if my spouse maintains her royal trust,
Though tempted, chaste, and obstinately just ? 215
Or if no more her absent lord she wails,
But the false woman o'er the wife prevails ?

Thus I : and thus the parent shade returns.
Thee, ever thee, thy faithful consort mourns :
Whether the night descends, or day prevails ! 220
Thee she by night, and thee by day bewails.
Thee in Telemachus thy realm obeys ;
In sacred groves celestial rites he pays,
And shares the banquet in superior state,
Grac'd with such honours as become the great. 225
Thy fire in solitude foment his care :
The court is joyless, for thou art not there !
No costly carpets raise his hoary head,
No rich embroid'ry shines to grace his bed :
Ev'n when keen winter freezes in the skies, 230
Rank'd with his slaves on earth, the monarch lies :
Deep are his sighs, his visage pale, his dress
The garb of wo, and habit of distress.
And when the autumn takes his annual round,
The leafy honours scatt'ring on the ground ; 235
Regardless of his years, abroad he lies,
His bed the leaves, his canopy the skies.
Thus cares on cares his painful days consume,
And bow his age with sorrow to the tomb !

For thee, my son, I wept my life away ; 240
For thee through hell's eternal dungeons stray :
Nor came my fate by ling'ring pains and slow,
Nor bent the silver-shafted queen her bow ;
No dire disease bereav'd me of my breath :
Thou, thou my son, wert my disease and death : 245
Unkindly with my love my son conspir'd ;
For thee I liv'd, for absent thee expir'd.

Thrice

Thrice in my arms I strove her shade to bind,
 Thrice through my arms she slipt like empty wind,
 Or dreams, the vain illusions of the mind. 250

Wild with despair, I shed a copious tide
 Of flowing tears, and thus with sighs reply'd.

Fly'st thou, lov'd shade, while I thus fondly mourn?
 Turn to my arms, to my embraces turn !

Is it, ye pow'rs that smile at human harms ! 255

Too great a bliss to weep within her arms ?

Or has hell's queen an empty image sent,
 That wretched I might ev'n my joys lament ?

O son of wo ! the pensive shade rejoin'd,
 Oh most inur'd to grief of all mankind ! 260

'Tis not the queen of hell who thee deceives :

All, all are such, when life the body leaves ;

No more the substance of the man remains,

Nor bounds the blood along the purple veins ;

These the funereal flames in atoms bear, 265

To wander with the wind in empty air ;

While the impassive soul reluctant flies,

Like a vain dream, to these infernal skies.

But from the dark dominion speed thy way,

And climb the steep ascent to upper day ; 270

To thy chaste bride the wondrous story tell,

The woes, the horrors, and the laws of hell.

Thus while she spoke, in swarms hell's empress brings
 Daughters and wives of heroes and of kings ;

Thick, and more thick they gather round the blood,

Ghost throng'd on ghost (a dire assembly) stood ! 276

Dauntless my sword I seize : the airy crew,

Swift, as it flash'd along the gloom, withdrew ;

Then shade to shade in mutual forms succeeds,

Her race recounts, and their illustrious deeds. 280

Tyro began : whom great Salmoneus bred ;

The royal partner of fam'd Cretheus' bed.

For fair Enipeus, as from fruitful urns

He pours his wat'ry store, the virgin burns ;

Smooth flows the gentle stream with wanton pride, 285

And in soft mazes rolls a silver tide :

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As on his banks the maid enamour'd roves,
The monarch of the deep beholds and loves ;
In her Enipeus' form and borrow'd charms,
The am'rous God descends into her arms : 290

Around, a spacious arch of waves he throws,
And high in air the liquid mountain rose :
Thus in surrounding floods conceal'd he proves
The pleasing transport, and completes his loves :
Then softly sighing, he the fair addrest, 295
And as he spoke, her tender hand he prest.

Hail, happy nymph ! no vulgar births are ow'd
To the prolific raptures of a god :
Lo ! when nine times the moon renews her horn,
Two brother-heroes shall from thee be born ; 300
Thy early care the future worthies claim,
To point them to the arduous paths of fame.
But in thy breast th' important truth conceal,
Nor dare the secret of a God reveal :

For know, thou Neptune view'st ! and at my nod 305
Earth trembles, and the waves confess their God.

He added not, but mounting spurn'd the plain,
Then plung'd into the chambers of the main.

Now in the time's full process forth she brings
Jove's dread vicegerents, in two future kings ; 310
O'er proud Iolcos Pelias stretch'd his reign,
And godlike Neleus rul'd the Pylian plain :
Then fruitful, to her Cretheus' royal bed
She gallant Pheres and fam'd Æson bred :
From the same fountain Amythaon rose, 315
Pleas'd with the din of war, and noble shout of foes.

There mov'd Antiope with haughty charms,
Who bless'd th' almighty Thund'rer in her arms :
Hence sprung Amphion, hence brave Zethus came,
Founders of Thebes, and men of mighty name ; 320
Though bold in open field, they yet surround
The town with walls, and mound inject on mound ;
Here ramparts stood, there tow'rs rose high in air,
And here through sev'n wide portals rush'd the war.

There with soft step the fair Alcmena trod, 325
Who bore Alcides to the thund'ring God ;

And

And Megara, who charm'd the son of Jove,
And soften'd his stern soul to tender love.

Sullen and sour with discontented mien
Jocasta frown'd, th' incestuous Theban queen : 330

With her own son she join'd in nuptial bands,
Though father's blood imbru'd his murd'rous hands :
The Gods and men the dire offence detest,
The Gods with all their furies rend his breast :
In lofty Thebes he wore th' imperial crown, 335

A pompous wretch ! accurs'd upon a throne.
The wife self-murder'd from a beam depends,
And her foul soul to blackest hell descends ;
Thence to her son the choicest plagues she brings,
And the fiends haunt him with a thousand stings. 340

And now the beauteous Chloris I descry,
A lovely shade, Amphion's youngest joy !
With gifts unnumber'd Neleus fought her arms,
Nor paid too dearly for unequal'd charms ;
Great in Orchomenos, in Pylos great, 345

He sway'd the sceptre with imperial state.
Three gallant sons the joyful monarch told,
Sage Nestor, Periclimenus the bold,
And Chromius last ; but of the softer race,
One nymph alone, a miracle of grace. 350

Kings on their thrones for lovely Pero burn,
The fire denies, and kings rejected mourn.
To him alone the beauteous prize he yields,
Whose arm should ravish from Phylacian fields
The herds of Iphyclus, detain'd in wrong ; 355

Wild, furious herds, unconquerably strong !
This dares a seer, but nought the seer prevails,
In beauty's cause illustriously he fails :
Twelve moons the foe the captive youth detains
In painful dungeons, and coercive chains ; 360

The foe at last, from durance where he lay,
His art revering, gave him back to day ;
Won by prophetic knowledge, to fulfil
The steadfast purpose of th' almighty will.

With graceful port advancing now I spy'd 365
Leda the fair, the godlike Tyndar's bride :

Hence

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Hence Pollux sprung, who wields, with furious sway,
The deathful gauntlet, matchless in the fray ;
And Castor, glorious on th' embattled plain,
Curbs the proud steed, reluctant to the rein : 370
By turns they visit this æthereal sky,
And live alternate, and alternate die :
In hell beneath, on earth, in heav'n above
Reign the twin-gods, the fav'rite sons of Jove.

There Ephimedia trod the gloomy plain, 375
Who charm'd the monarch of the boundless main :

Hence Ephialtes, hence stern Otus sprung,
More fierce than giants, more than giants strong ;
The earth o'erburthen'd groan'd beneath their weight,
None but Orion e'er surpass'd their height : 380

The wondrous youths had scarce nine winters told,
When high in air, tremendous to behold,
Nine ells aloft they rear'd their tow'ring head,
And full nine cubits broad their shoulders spread.

Proud of their strength and more than mortal size,
The Gods they challenge, and affect the skies ; 386
Heav'd on Olympus tottering Æssa stood ;
On Æssa, Pelion nods with all his wood :

Such were the youths ! had they to manhood grown,
Almighty Jove had trembled on his throne. 390

But ere the harvest of the beard began
To bristle on the chin, and promise man,
His shafts Apollo aim'd ; at once they found,
And stretch the giant-monsters o'er the ground.

There mournful Phædra with sad Procris moves, 395
Bothauteous shades, both hapless in their loves ;

And near them walk'd, with solemn pace and slow,
Sad Ariadne, partner of their wo :

The royal Minos Ariadne bred ;
She Theseus lov'd ; from Crete with Theseus fled : 400
Swift to the Dian isle the hero flies,

And tow'ards his Athens bears the lovely prize ;
There Bacchus with fierce rage Diana fires,
The Goddess aims her shaft, the nymph expires.

There Clymenè and Mæra I behold, 405 }
 There Eriphylè weeps, who loosely sold
 Her lord, her honour, for the lust of gold.
 But should I all recount, the night would fail,
 Unequal to the melancholy tale :
 And all-composing rest my nature craves, 410
 Here in the court, or yonder on the waves ;
 In you I trust, and in the heav'nly pow'rs,
 To land Ulysses on his native shores.

He ceas'd : but left so charming on their ear
 His voice, that list'ning still they seem'd to hear : 415
 Till rising up, Aretè silence broke,
 Stretch'd out her snowy hand, and thus she spoke :

What wondrous man heav'n sends us in our guest !
 Through all his woes the hero shines confest :
 His comely port, his ample frame exprest 420
 A manly air, majestic in distress.
 He, as my guest, is my peculiar care ;
 You share the pleasure,—then in bounty share ;
 To worth in misery a rev'rence pay,
 And with a gen'rous hand reward his stay ; 425
 For since kind heav'n with wealth our realm has blest'd,
 Give it to heav'n, by aiding the distress'd.

Then sage Echeneus, whose grave, rev'rend brow
 The hand of time had silver'd o'er with snow,
 Mature in wisdom, rose : Your words, he cries, 430
 Demand obedience, for your words are wise.
 But let our king direct the glorious way
 To gen'rous acts ; our part is to obey.

While life informs these limbs, (the king reply'd),
 Well to deserve, be all my cares employ'd. 435
 But here this night the royal guest detain,
 Till the sun flames along th' æthereal plain :
 Be it my task to send, with ample stores,
 The stranger from our hospitable shores :
 Tread you my steps ! 'Tis mine to lead the race, 440
 The first in glory, as the first in place.

To whom the prince : This night with joy I stay,
 O monarch great in virtue as in sway !

If thou the circling year my stay controul,
 To raise a bounty noble as thy soul ; 445
 The circling year I wait, with ampler stores
 And fitter pomp to hail my native shores :
 Then by my realms due homage would be paid ;
 For wealthy kings are loyally obey'd !

O king ! for such thou art, and sure thy blood 450
 Through veins (he cry'd) of royal fathers flow'd ;
 Unlike those vagrants who on falsehood live,
 Skill'd in smooth tales, and artful to deceive ;
 Thy better soul abhors the liar's part,
 Wise is thy voice, and noble is thy heart. 455
 Thy words like music ev'ry breast controul,
 Steal through the ear, and win upon the soul ;
 Soft, as some song divine, thy story flows,
 Nor better could the muse record thy woes.

But say, upon the dark and dismal coast, 460
 Saw'st thou the worthies of the Grecian host,
 The godlike leaders, who, in battle slain,
 Fell before Troy, and nobly press'd the plain ?
 And lo ! a length of night behind remains,
 The ev'ning stars still mount th' æthereal plains. 465
 Thy tale with raptures I could hear thee tell,
 Thy woes on earth, the wondrous scenes in hell,
 Till in the vault of heav'n the stars decay,
 And the sky reddens with the rising day.

O worthy of the pow'r the Gods assign'd, 470
 (Ulysses thus replies), a king in mind !
 Since yet the early hour of night allows
 Time for discourse, and time for soft repose,
 If scenes of misery can entertain,
 Woes I unfold, of woes a dismal train. 475
 Prepare to hear of murder and of blood ;
 Of godlike heroes who uninjur'd stood
 Amidst a war of spears in foreign lands,
 Yet bled at home, and bled by female hands.

Now summon'd Proserpine to hell's black hall 480
 The heroine shades ; they vanish'd at her call ;

When lo! advanc'd the forms of heroes slain
 By stern Egysthus, a majestic train,
 And high above the rest, Atides press'd the plain.
 He quaff'd the gore; and straight his soldier knew, 485
 And from his eyes pour'd down the tender dew;
 His arms he stretch'd; his arms the touch deceive,
 Nor in the fond embrace, embraces give:
 His substance vanish'd, and his strength decay'd,
 Now all Atides is an empty shade. 490

Mov'd at the sight, I for a space resign'd
 To soft affliction all my manly mind:
 At last with tears——O what relentless doom,
 Imperial phantom, bow'd thee to the tomb?
 Say, while the sea, and while the tempest raves, 495
 Has fate oppress'd thee in the roaring waves,
 Or nobly seiz'd thee in the dire alarms
 Of war and slaughter, and the clash of arms?

The ghost returns: O chief of human kind
 For active courage and a patient mind; 500
 Nor while the sea, nor while the tempest raves,
 Has fate oppress'd me on the roaring waves;
 Nor nobly seiz'd me in the dire alarms,
 Of war and slaughter, and the clash of arms.
 Stabb'd by a murd'rous hand Atides dy'd, 505
 A foul adult'rer, and a faithless bride;
 Ev'n in my mirth and at the friendly feast,
 O'er the full bowl, the traitor stabb'd his guest:
 Thus by the gory arm of slaughter falls
 The stately ox, and bleeds within the stalls. 510

But not with me the direful murder ends,
 These, these expir'd! their crime, they were my friends;
 Thick as the boars, which some luxurious lord
 Kills for the feast, to crown the nuptial board.
 When war has thunder'd with its loudest storms, 515
 Death thou hast seen in all her ghastly forms;
 In duel met her, on the list'd ground,
 When hand to hand they wound return for wound;
 But never have thy eyes astonish'd view'd
 So vile a deed, so dire a scene of blood. 520

Ev'n.

Ev'n in the flow of joy, when now the bowl
 Glows in our veins, and opens ev'ry soul,
 We groan, we faint ; with blood the dome is dy'd,
 And o'er the pavement floats the dreadful tide —
 Her breast all gore, with lamentable cries, 525
 The bleeding innocent Cassandra dies !
 Then though pale death froze cold in ev'ry vein,
 My sword I strive to wield, but strive in vain ;
 Nor did my trait'refs wife these eyelids close,
 Or decently in death my limbs compose. 530
 O woman, woman, when to ill thy mind
 Is bent, all hell contains no fouler fiend :
 And such was mine ! who basely plung'd her sword
 Through the fond bosom where she reign'd ador'd !
 Alas ! I hop'd, the toils of war o'ercome, 535
 To meet soft quiet and repose at home ;
 Delusive hope ! O wife, thy deeds disgrace
 The perjur'd sex, and blacken all the race ;
 And should posterity one virtuous find,
 Name Clytemnestra, they will curse the kind. 540
 O injur'd shade ! I cry'd, what mighty woes
 To thy imperial race from woman rose !
 By woman here thou tread'st this mournful strand,
 And Greece by woman lies a desert land.
 Warn'd by my ills, beware, the shade replies, 545
 Nor trust the sex that is so rarely wise :
 When earnest to explore thy secret breast,
 Unfold some trifle, but conceal the rest.
 But in thy consort cease to fear a foe,
 For thee she feels sincerity of wo : 550
 When Troy first bled beneath the Grecian arms,
 She shone unrival'd with a blaze of charms,
 Thy infant son her fragrant bosom prest,
 Hung at her knee, or wanton'd at her breast ;
 But now the years a num'rous train have ran ; 555
 The blooming boy is ripen'd into man ;
 Thy eyes shall see him burn with noble fire,
 The fire shall bless his son, the son his fire.
 But my Orestes never met these eyes,
 Without one look the murder'd father dies. 560

Then from a wretched friend this wisdom learn,
 Ev'n to thy queen disguis'd, unknown, return ;
 For since of womankind so few are just,
 Think all are false, nor ev'n the faithful trust.

But say, resides my son in royal port, 565
 In rich Orchomenos, or Sparta's court ?
 Or say in Pyle ? for yet he views the light,
 Nor glides a phantom through the realms of night.

Then I : Thy suit is vain ; nor can I say 570
 If yet he breathes in realms of cheerful day,
 Or pale and wan beholds these nether skies.
 Truth I revere ; for wisdom never lies.

Thus in a tide of tears our sorrows flow,
 And add new horror to the realms of wo :
 Till side by side along the dreary coast 575
 Advanc'd Achilles' and Patroclus' ghost,
 A friendly pair ! near these the Pylian * stray'd,
 And tow'ring Ajax, an illustrious shade !
 War was his joy, and pleas'd with loud alarms,
 None but Pelides brighter shone in arms. 580

Through the thick gloom his friend Achilles knew,
 And as he speaks, the tears descend in dew.

Com'st thou alive to view the Stygian bounds,
 Where the wan spectres walk eternal rounds ;
 Nor fear'st the dark and dismal waste to tread, 585
 Throng'd with pale ghosts, familiar with the dead ?

To whom with sighs : I pass these dreadful gates
 To seek the Theban, and consult the fates :
 For still distress'd I rove from coast to coast,
 Lost to my friends, and to my country lost. 590

But sure the eye of time beholds no name
 So blest'd as thine in all the rolls of fame ;
 Alive, we hail'd thee with our guardian Gods ;
 And dead, thou rul'st a king in these abodes.

Talk not of ruling in this dol'rous gloom, 595
 Nor think vain words (he cry'd) can ease my doom.
 Rather I chuse laboriously to bear
 A weight of woes, and breathe the vital air,

* Antilochus.

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A slave to some poor hind that toils for bread,
 Than reign the sceptred monarch of the dead. 600
 But say, if in my steps my son proceeds,
 And emulates his godlike father's deeds ?
 If at the clash of arms, and shout of foes,
 Swells his bold heart, his bosom nobly glows ?
 Say, if my sire, the rev'rend Peleus, reigns 605
 Great in his Phthia, and his throne maintains ;
 Or weak and old, my youthful arm demands,
 To fix the sceptre steadfast in his hands ?
 O might the lamp of life rekindled burn,
 And death release me from the silent urn ! 610
 This arm that thunder'd o'er the Phrygian plain,
 And swell'd the ground with mountains of the slain,
 Should vindicate my injur'd father's fame,
 Crush the proud rebel, and assert his claim.
 Illustrious shade ! (I cry'd), of Peleus' fates 615
 No circumstance the voice of fame relates :
 But hear with pleas'd attention the renown,
 The wars and wisdom of thy gallant son :
 With me from Scyros to the field of fame,
 Radiant in arms, the blooming hero came. 620
 When Greece assembled all her hundred states,
 To ripen counsels, and decide debates ;
 Heav'ns ! how he charm'd us with a flow of sense,
 And won the heart with manly eloquence !
 He first was seen of all the peers to rise, 625
 The third in wisdom where they all were wise ;
 But when, to try the fortune of the day,
 Host mov'd tow'rd host in terrible array,
 Before the van, impatient for the fight,
 With martial port he strode, and stern delight ; 630
 Heaps strew'd on heaps beneath his faulchion groan'd,
 And monuments of dead deform'd the ground.
 The time would fail should I in order tell
 What foes were vanquish'd, and what numbers fell :
 How, lost through love, Eurypylus was slain, 635
 And round him bled his bold Cetaean train.
 To Troy no hero came of nobler line,
 Or if of nobler, Memnon, it was thine.

When

When Ilion in the horse receiv'd her doom,
 And unseen armies ambush'd in its womb ; 640
 Greece gave her latent warriors to my care,
 'Twas mine on Troy to pour th' imprison'd war :
 Then when the boldest bosom beat with fear,
 When the stern eyes of heroes dropp'd a tear ;
 Fierce in his look his ardent valour glow'd, 645
 Flush'd in his cheek, or fally'd in his blood ;
 Indignant in the dark recess he stands,
 Pants for the battle, and the war demands ;
 His voice breath'd death, and with a martial air
 He grasp'd his sword, and shook his glitt'ring spear. 650
 And when the Gods our arms with conquest crown'd,
 When Troy's proud bulwarks smok'd upon the ground,
 Greece to reward her soldier's gallant toils
 Heap'd high his navy with unnumber'd spoils.

Thus great in glory from the din of war 655
 Safe he return'd, without one hostile scar ;
 Though spears in iron tempests rain'd around,
 Yet innocent they play'd, and guiltless of a wound.

While yet I spoke, the shade with transport glow'd,
 Rose in his majesty, and nobler trod ; 660
 With haughty stalk he sought the distant glades
 Of warrior-kings, and join'd th' illustrious shades.

Now without number ghost by ghost arose,
 All wailing with unutterable woes.
 Alone, apart, in discontented mood 665
 A gloomy shade ! the sullen Ajax stood ;
 For ever sad, with proud disdain he pin'd,
 And the lost arms for ever stung his mind ;
 Though to the contest Thetis gave the laws,
 And Pallas, by the Trojans, judg'd the cause. 670
 O why was I victorious in the strife ?

O dear-bought honour with so brave a life !
 With him the strength of war, the soldiers pride,
 Our second hope to great Achilles dy'd !
 Touch'd at the sight from tears I scarce refrain, 675
 And tender sorrow thrills in ev'ry vein ;
 Pensive and sad I stand, at length accost,
 With accents mild, th' inexorable ghost.

Still

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Still burns thy rage? and can brave souls resent
Ev'n after death? Relent, great shade, relent! 680
Perish those arms which by the Gods decree
Accurs'd our army with the loss of thee!
With thee we fell; Greece wept thy hapless fates;
And shook astonish'd through her hundred states;
Not more, when great Achilles press'd the ground, 685
And breath'd his manly spirit through the wound.
O deem thy fall not ow'd to man's decree!
Jove hated Greece, and punish'd Greece in thee!
Turn then, oh peaceful turn! thy wrath controul,
And calm the raging tempest of thy soul. 690

While yet I speak, the shade disdains to stay,
In silence turns, and sullen stalks away.

Touch'd at his sour retreat, through deepest night,
Thro' hell's black bounds I had pursu'd his flight,
And forc'd the stubborn spectre to reply; 695
But wondrous visions drew my curious eye.
High on a throne tremendous to behold,
Stern Minos waves a mace of burnish'd gold;
Around, ten thousand thousand spectres stand
Through the wide dome of Dis, a trembling band. 700
Still as they plead, the fatal lots he rolls,
Absolves the just, and dooms the guilty souls.

There huge Orion of portentous size,
Swift thro' the gloom a giant-hunter flies:
A pond'rous mace of brass with direful sway 705
Aloft he whirls, to crush the savage prey;
Stern beasts in trains that by his truncheon fell,
Now grisly forms, shoot o'er the lawns of hell.

There Tityus large and long, in fetters bound,
O'erspreads nine acres of infernal ground; 710
Two rav'nous vultures, furious for their food,
Scream o'er the fiend, and riot in his blood,
Incessant gore the liver in his breast;
Th' immortal liver grows, and gives th' immortal feast.
For as o'er Panopè's enamell'd plains 715
Latona journey'd to the Pythian fanes,
With haughty love th' audacious monster strove
To force the Goddess, and to rival Jove.

There

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There Tantalus along the Stygian bounds
 Pours out deep groans, (with groans all hell resounds),
 Ev'n in the circling floods refreshment craves, 721
 And pines with thirst amidst a sea of waves :
 When to the water he his lip applies,
 Back from his lip the treach'rous water flies.
 Above, beneath, around his hapless head, 725
 Trees of all kinds delicious fruitage spread ;
 There figs sky-dy'd a purple hue disclose,
 Green looks the olive, the pomegranate glows,
 There dangling pears exalted scents unfold,
 And yellow apples ripen into gold : 730
 The fruit he strives to seize : but blasts arise,
 Toss it on high, and whirl it to the skies.

I turn'd my eye, and as I turn'd survey'd
 A mournful vision ! the Sisyphian shade ;
 With many a weary step, and many a groan, 735
 Up the high hill he heaves a huge round stone :
 The huge round stone, resulting with a bound,
 Thunders impetuous down, and smokes along the ground ;
 Again the restless orb his toil renews,
 Dust mounts in clouds, and sweat descends in dews.

Now I the strength of Hercules behold, 741
 A tow'ring spectre of gigantic mold,
 A shadowy form ! for high in heav'n's abodes
 Himself resides, a God among the Gods :
 There in the bright assemblies of the skies, 745
 He nectar quaffs, and Hebe crowns his joys.
 Here hov'ring ghosts, like fowl, his shade surround,
 And clang their pinions with terrific sound ;
 Gloomy as night he stands, in act to throw
 Th' æreal arrow from the twanging bow. 750
 Around his breast a wondrous zone is roll'd,
 Where woodland monsters grin in fretted gold ;
 There sullen lions sternly seem to roar,
 The bear to growl, to foam the tusky boar ;
 There war, and havock, and destruction stood, 755
 And vengeful murder red with human blood !
 Thus terribly adorn'd the figures shine,
 Inimitably wrought with skill divine.

The

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The mighty ghost advanc'd with awful look,
And turning his grim visage, sternly spoke. 760

O exercis'd in grief ! by arts refin'd !
O taught to bear the wrongs of base mankind !
Such, such was I ! still toss'd from care to care,
While in your world I drew the vital air !
Ev'n I who from the Lord of thunders rose, 765
Bore toils, and dangers, and a weight of woes ;
To a base monarch still a slave confin'd,
(The hardest bondage to a gen'rous mind !)
Down to these worlds I trod the dismal way,
And dragg'd the three-mouth'd dog to upper day ; 770
Ev'n hell I conquer'd, through the friendly aid
Of Maia's offspring and the martial maid.

Thus he ; nor deign'd for our reply to stay,
But turning stalk'd with giant-strides away.

Cærious to view the kings of ancient days, 775
The mighty dead that live in endless praise,
Resolv'd I stand ; and haply had survey'd
The godlike Theseus, and Perithous' shade ;
But swarms of spectres rose from deepest hell,
With bloodless visage, and with hideous yell, 780
They scream, they shriek ; sad groans and dismal sounds
Stun my scar'd ears, and pierce hell's utmost bounds.

No more my heart the dismal din sustains,
And my cold blood hangs shiv'ring in my veins ;
Lest Gorgon rising from th' infernal lakes, 785
With horrors arm'd, and curls of hissing snakes,
Should fix me, stiffen'd at the monstrous sight,
A stony image, in eternal night !

Straight from the direful coast to purer air
I speed my flight, and to my mates repair. 790

My mates ascend the ship ; they strike their oars ;
The mountains lessen, and retreat the shores :
Swift o'er the waves we fly ; the fresh'ning gales
Sing through the shrouds, and stretch the swelling sails.

THE

T H E
O D Y S S E Y.
B O O K XII.

T H E A R G U M E N T.

The Sirens, Scylla, and Charybdis.

He relates, how, after his return from the shades, he was sent by Circe on his voyage, by the coast of the Sirens, and by the strait of Scylla and Charybdis: the manner in which he escaped those dangers: how, being cast on the island Trinacria, his companions destroyed the oxen of the sun: the vengeance that followed: how all perished by shipwreck, except himself, who, swimming on the mast of the ship, arrived on the island of Calypso. With which his narration concludes.

THus o'er the rolling surge the vessel flies,
Till from the waves th' Ææan hills arise.
Here the gay morn resides in radiant bow'rs,
Here keeps her revels with the dancing Hours;
Here Phœbus rising in th' æthereal way, 5
Thro' heav'n's bright portals pours the beamy day.
At once we fix our halbers on the land,
At once descend, and press the desert sand;
There worn and wasted, lose our cares in sleep,
To the hoarse murmurs of the rolling deep. 10
Soon as the morn restor'd the day, we paid
Sepulchral honours to Elpenor's shade.
Now by the axe the rushing forest bends,
And the huge pile along the shore ascends.

Around

Around we stand, a melancholy train ! 15
 And a loud groan re-echoes from the main.
 Fierce o'er the pyre, by fanning breezes spread,
 The hungry flame devours the silent dead.
 A rising tomb, the silent dead to grace,
 Fast by the roarings of the main we place ; 20
 The rising tomb a lofty column bore,
 And high above it rose the tap'ring oar.

Meantime the * Goddesses our return survey'd
 From the pale ghosts, and hell's tremendous shade.
 Swift she descends : a train of nymphs divine 25
 Bear the rich viands and the gen'rous wine :
 In act to speak the * pow'r of magic stands,
 And graceful thus accosts the list'ning bands.

O sons of wo ! decreed by adverse fates
 Alive to pass through hell's eternal gates ! 30
 All, soon or late, are doom'd that path to tread :
 More wretched you ! twice number'd with the dead !
 This day adjourn your cares ; exalt your souls,
 Indulge the taste, and drain the sparkling bowls :
 And when the morn unveils her saffron ray, 35
 Spread your broad sails, and plough the liquid way.
 Lo I this night, your faithful guide, explain
 Your woes by land, your dangers on the main.

The Goddesses spoke. In feasts we waste the day,
 Till Phœbus downward plung'd his burning ray ; 40
 Then sable night ascends, and balmy rest
 Seals ev'ry eye, and calms the troubled breast.
 Then curious she commands me to relate
 The dreadful scenes of Pluto's dreary state.
 She sat in silence while the tale I tell, 45
 The wondrous visions, and the laws of hell.

Then thus : The lot of man the Gods dispose ;
 These ills are past ; now hear thy future woes.
 O prince attend ! some fav'ring pow'r be kind,
 And print th' important story on thy mind ! 50

Next, where the Sirens dwell, you plough the seas ;
 Their song is death, and makes destruction please.

* Circe.

† R

Unless'd

Unblest'd the man, whom music wins to stay
Nigh the curs'd shore, and listen to the lay !

No more that wretch shall view the joys of life, 55
His blooming offspring, or his beauteous wife !

In verdant meads they sport, and wide around
Lie human bones, that whiten all the ground ;

The ground polluted floats with human gore,
And human carnage taints the dreadful shore. 60

Fly swift the dang'rous coast : let ev'ry ear
Be stopp'd against the song ! 'tis death to hear !

Firm to the mast with chains thyself be bound,
Nor trust thy virtue to th' enchanting sound.

If mad with transport, freedom thou demand, 65
Be ev'ry fetter strain'd, and added band to band.

These seas o'erpass'd, be wise ! but I refrain
To mark distinct thy voyage o'er the main :

New horrors rise ! let prudence be thy guide,
And guard thy various passage through the tide. 70

High o'er the main two rocks exalt their brow,
The boiling billows thund'ring roll below ;

Through the vast waves the dreadful wonders move,
Hence nam'd Erratic by the Gods above.

No bird of air, no dove of swiftest wing, 75
That bears ambrosia to th' æthereal king,

Shuns the dire rocks : in vain she cuts the skies,
The dire rocks meet, and crush her as she flies :

Not the fleet bark, when prosp'rous breezes play,
Ploughs o'er that roaring surge its desp'rate way ; 80

O'erwhelm'd it sinks : while round a smoke expires,
And the waves flashing seem to burn with fires.

Scarce the fam'd Argo pass'd these raging floods,
The sacred Argo, fill'd with demigods !

Ev'n she had sunk, but Jove's imperial bride 85
Wing'd her fleet sail, and push'd her o'er the tide.

High in the air the rock its summit shrouds,
In brooding tempests, and in rolling clouds ;

Loud storms around, and mists eternal rise,
Beat its bleak brow, and intercept the skies. 90

When all the broad expansion, bright with day,
Glow's with th' autumnal or the summer ray,

The

The summer and the autumn glow in vain,
 The sky for ever lours, for ever clouds remain.
 Impervious to the step of man it stands, 95
 Tho' born by twenty feet, tho' arm'd with twenty hands;
 Smooth as the polish of the mirror rise
 The slipp'ry sides, and shoot into the skies.
 Full in the centre of this rock display'd,
 A yawning cavern casts a dreadful shade : 103
 Nor the fleet arrow from the twanging bow,
 Sent with full force, could reach the depth below.
 Wide to the west the horrid gulf extends,
 And the dire passage down to hell descends.
 O fly the dreadful sight ! expand thy sails, 105
 Ply the strong oar, and catch the nimble gale ;
 Here Scylla bellows from her dire abodes,
 Tremendous pest ! abhorr'd by man and Gods !
 Hideous her voice, and with less terrors roar
 The whelps of lions in the midnight-hour. 110
 Twelve feet deform'd and foul the fiend dispreads ;
 Six horrid necks she rears, and six terrific heads ;
 Her jaws grin dreadful with three rows of teeth ;
 Jaggy they stand, the gaping den of death :
 Per parts obscene the raging billows hide ; 115
 Her bosom terribly o'erlooks the tide.
 When stung with hunger she embroils the flood,
 The sea-dog and the dolphin are her food ;
 She makes the huge leviathan her prey,
 And all the monsters of the wat'ry way : 120
 The swiftest racer of the azure plain
 Here fills her sails and spreads her oars in vain ;
 Fell Scylla rises, in her fury roars,
 At once six mouths expands, at once six men devours.
 Close by, a rock of less enormous height 125
 Breaks the wild waves, and forms a dang'rous streight ;
 Full on its crown a fig's green branches rise,
 And shoot a leafy forest to the skies ;
 Beneath, Charybdis holds her boist'rous reign
 'Midst roaring whirlpools, and absorbs the main ; 130
 Thrice in her gulfs the boiling seas subside,
 Thrice in dire thunders she refunds the tide.

Oh if thy vessel plough the direful waves
 When seas retreating roar within her caves,
 Ye perish all ! though he who rules the main 135
 Lend his strong aid, his aid he lends in vain.
 Ah shun the horrid gulf ! by Scylla fly ;
 'Tis better six to lose, than all to die.

I then : O nymph propitious to my pray'r,
 Goddess divine, my guardian pow'r, declare, 140
 Is the foul fiend from human vengeance freed ?
 Or if I rise in arms, can Scylla bleed ?

Then she : O worn by toils, oh broke in fight !
 Still are new toils and war thy dire delight ?
 Will martial flames for ever fire thy mind, 145
 And never, never be to heav'n resign'd ?
 How vain thy efforts to avenge the wrong ?
 Deathless the pest ! impenetrably strong !
 Furious and fell ! tremendous to behold !
 Ev'n with a look she withers all the bold ! 150
 She mocks the weak attempts of human might ;
 O fly her rage ! thy conquest is thy flight.
 If but to seize thy arms thou make delay,
 Again the fury vindicates her prey.

Her six mouths yawn, and six are snatch'd away.
 From her foul womb Crataeis gave to air 156
 This dreadful pest ! To her direct thy pray'r,
 To curb the monster in her dire abodes,
 And guard thee through the tumult of the floods.
 Thence to Trinacria's shore you bend your way, 160
 Where graze thy herds, illustrious source of day !
 Sev'n herds, sev'n flocks enrich the sacred plains,
 Each herd, each flock full fifty heads contains ;
 The wondrous kind a length of age survey,
 By breed increase not, nor by death decay. 165
 Two sister-goddesses possess the plain,
 The constant guardians of the woolly train ;
 Lampetie fair, and Phaethusa young,
 From Phœbus and the bright Næara sprung :
 Here watchful o'er the flocks, in shady bow'rs 170
 And flow'ry meads, they waste the joyous hours.

Rob not the God ! and so propitious gales
Attend thy voyage, and impel thy sails ;
But if thy impious hands the flocks destroy,
The Gods, the Gods avenge it, and ye die ! 175
'Tis thine alone (thy friends and navy lost)
Through tedious toils to view thy native coast.

She ceas'd : and now arose the morning-ray ;
Swift to her dome the Goddess held her way.
Then to my mates I measur'd back the plain, 180
Climb'd the tall bark, and rush'd into the main ;
Then bending to the stroke, their oars they drew
To their broad breasts, and swift the galley flew.
Up-sprung a brisker breeze ; with fresh'ning gales
The friendly Goddess stretch'd the swelling sails : 185
We drop our oars ; at ease the pilot guides ;
The vessel light along the level glides ;
When rising sad and slow, with pensive look,
Thus to the melancholy train I spoke :

O friends, oh ever partners of my woes ! 190
Attend while I what heav'n foredooms disclose ;
Hear all ! fate hangs o'er all ! on you it lies
To live, or perish ; to be safe, be wise !

In flow'ry meads the sportive Sirens play,
Touch the soft lyre, and tune the vocal lay. 195
Me, me alone, with fetters firmly bound,
The Gods allow to hear the dang'rous sound.
Hear and obey : if freedom I demand,
Be ev'ry fetter strain'd, be added band to band.

While yet I speak, the winged galley flies, 200
And lo ! the Siren shores like mills arise.
Sunk were at once the winds ; the air above,
And waves below, at once forgot to move :
Some dæmon calm'd the air, and smooth'd the deep,
Hush'd the loud winds, and charm'd the waves to sleep,
Now ev'ry sail we furl, each oar we ply ; 206
Lash'd by the stroke the frothy waters fly.
The ductile wax with busy hands I mold,
And cleft in fragments, and the fragments roll'd :
Th' æreal region now grew warm with day, 210
The wax dissolv'd beneath the burning ray ;

Then ev'ry ear I barr'd against the strain,
 And from access of frenzy lock'd the brain.
 Now round the mast my mates the fetters roll'd,
 And bound me limb by limb, with fold on fold. 215
 Then bending to the stroke, the active train
 Plunge all at once their oars, and cleave the main.

While to the shore the rapid vessel flies,
 Our swift approach the Siren quire descries ;
 Celestial music warbles from their tongue, 220
 And thus the sweet deluders tune the song.

O stay, oh pride of Greece ! Ulysses, stay !
 O cease thy course, and listen to our lay !
 Bless'd is the man ordain'd our voice to hear ;
 The song instructs the soul, and charms the ear. 225
 Approach ! thy soul shall into raptures rise !
 Approach ! and learn new wisdom from the wise !
 We know whate'er the kings of mighty name
 Achiev'd at Ilion in the field of fame ;

Whate'er beneath the sun's bright journey lies. 230
 O stay, and learn new wisdom from the wise !

Thus the sweet charmers warbled o'er the main ;
 My soul takes wing to meet the heav'nly strain ;
 I give the sign, and struggle to be free :
 Swift row my mates, and shoot along the sea ; 235
 New chains they add, and rapid urge the way,
 Till dying off, the distant sounds decay :
 Then scudding swiftly from the dang'rous ground,
 The deafen'd ear unlock'd, the chains unbound.

Now all at once tremendous scenes unfold ; 240
 Thunder'd the deeps, the smoking billows roll'd !
 Tumultuous waves embroil'd the bellowing flood ;
 All trembling, deafen'd, and aghast we stood !
 No more the vessel plough'd the dreadful wave,
 Fear seiz'd the mighty, and unnerv'd the brave ; 245
 Each dropp'd his oar : but swift from man to man
 With look serene I turn'd, and thus began.
 O friends ! oh often try'd in adverse storms !
 With ills familiar in more dreadful forms !
 Deep in the dire Cyclopean den you lay, 250
 Yet safe return'd——Ulysses led the way.

Learn courage hence ! and in my care confide :
 Lo ! still the same Ulysses is your guide !
 Attend my words ! your oars incessant ply ;
 Strain ev'ry nerve, and bid the vessel fly. 255
 If from yon jutting rocks and wavy war
 Jove safety grants, he grants it to your care.
 And thou whose guiding hand directs our way,
 Pilot, attentive listen and obey !
 Bear wide thy course, nor plough those angry waves 260
 Where rolls yon smoke, yon tumbling ocean raves ;
 Steer by the higher rock ; lest whirl'd around
 We sink, beneath the circling eddy drown'd.

While yet I speak, at once their oars they seize,
 Stretch to the stroke, and brush the working seas. 265
 Cautious the name of Scylla I suppress ;
 That dreadful sound had chill'd the boldest breast.

Meantime, forgetful of the voice divine,
 All dreadful bright my limbs in armour shine ;
 High on the deck I take my dang'rous stand, 270
 Two glitt'ring jav'lins lighten in my hand ;
 Prepar'd to whirl the whizzing spear I stay,
 Till the fell fiend arise to seize her prey.
 Around the dungeon, studious to behold
 The hideous pest, my lab'ring eyes I roll'd ; 275
 In vain ! the dismal dungeon dark as night
 Veils the dire monster, and confounds the sight.

Now thro' the rocks, appall'd with deep dismay,
 We bend our course, and stem the desp'rate way ;
 Dire Scylla there a scene of horror forms, 280
 And here Charybdis fills the deep with storms.
 When the tide rushes from her rumbling caves,
 The rough rock roars ; tumultuous boil the waves ;
 They tofs, they foam, a wild confusion raise,
 Like waters bubbling o'er the fiery blaze ; 285
 Eternal mists obscure th' æreal plain,
 And high above the rock she spouts the main ;
 When in her gulfs the rushing sea subsides,
 She drains the ocean with the reflux tides :
 The rock rebellow with a thund'ring sound ; 290
 Deep, wondrous deep, below appears the ground.

Struck

Struck with despair, with trembling hearts we view'd
 The yawning dungeon, and the tumbling flood ;
 When lo ! fierce Scylla stoop'd to seize her prey,
 Stretch'd her dire jaws, and swept six men away ; 295
 Chiefs of renown ! loud echoing shrieks arise ;
 I turn and view them quiv'ring in the skies ;
 They call, and aid with outstretch'd arms implore :
 In vain they call ! those arms are stretch'd no more.
 As from some rock that overhangs the flood, 300
 The silent fisher casts th' insidious food,
 With fraudulent care he waits the sly prize,
 And sudden lifts it quiv'ring to the skies :
 So the foul monster lifts her prey on high,
 So pant the wretches, struggling in the sky ; 305
 In the wide dungeon she devours her food,
 And the flesh trembles while she churns the blood.
 Worn as I am with griefs, with care decay'd,
 Never, I never scene so dire survey'd !
 My shiv'ring blood congeal'd, forgot to flow ; 310
 Aghast I stood, a monument of wo !

Now from the rocks the rapid vessel flies,
 And the hoarse din like distant thunder dies :
 To Sol's bright isle our voyage we pursue ;
 And now the glitt'ring mountains rise to view. 315
 There sacred to the radiant God of day
 Graze the fair herds, the flock promiscuous stray :
 Then suddenly was heard along the main
 To low the ox, to bleat the woolly train ;
 Straight to my anxious thoughts the sound convey'd 320
 The words of Circe and the Theban shade ;
 Warn'd by their awful voice these shores to shun,
 With cautious fears oppress'd, I thus begun.

O friends ! oh ever exercis'd in care !
 Hear heav'n's commands, and reverence what ye hear !
 To fly these shores the prescient Theban shade 326
 And Circe warns ! O be their voice obey'd !
 Some mighty wo relentless heav'n forebodes :
 Fly these dire regions, and revere the Gods !

While

While yet I spoke, a sudden sorrow ran 330
Thro' ev'ry breast, and spread from man to man,
Till wrathful thus Eurylochus began.

O cruel thou! some fury sure has steel'd
That stubborn soul, by toil untaught to yield!
From sleep debarr'd, we sink from woes to woes, 335
And, cruel, enviest thou a short repose?
Still must we restless rove, new seas explore,
The sun descending, and so near the shore?
And lo! the night begins her gloomy reign,
And doubles all the terrors of the main. 340
Oft in the dead of night loud winds arise,
Lash the wild surge, and bluster in the skies;
Oh should the fierce south-west his rage display,
And toss with rising storms the wat'ry way,
Tho' Gods descend from heav'n's æreal plain. 345
To lend us aid, the Gods descend in vain:
Then while the night displays her awful shade,
Sweet time of slumber! be the night obey'd!
Haste ye to land: and when the morning ray
Sheds her bright beams, pursue the destin'd way. 350
A sudden joy in ev'ry bosom rose;
So will'd some dæmon, minister of woes!

To whom with grief—O swift to be undone,
Constrain'd I act what wisdom bids me shun.
But yonder herds and yonder flocks forbear; 355
Attest the heav'ns, and call the Gods to hear:
Content, an innocent repast display,
By Circe giv'n, and fly the dang'rous prey.

Thus I: and while to shore the vessel flies,
With hands uplifted they attest the skies; 360
Then where a fountain's gurgling waters play,
They rush to land, and end in feasts the day:
They feed; they quaff; and now (their hunger fled)
Sigh for their friends devour'd, and mourn the dead.
Nor cease the tears, till each in slumber shares 365
A sweet forgetfulness of human cares.

Now far the night advanc'd her gloomy reign,
And setting stars roll'd down the azure plain;
When,

When, at the voice of Jove, wild whirlwinds rise,
 And clouds and double darkness veil the skies ; 370
 The moon, the stars, the bright æthereal host,
 Seem as extinct, and all their splendours lost ;
 The furious tempest roars with dreadful sound :
 Air thunders, rolls the ocean, groans the ground.
 All night it rag'd ; when morning rose, to land 375
 We haul'd our bark, and moor'd it on the strand,
 Where in a beauteous grotto's cool recess
 Dance the green Nereids of the neighb'ring seas.

There while the wild winds whistled o'er the main,
 Thus careful I address'd the list'ning train. 380

O friends be wise ! nor dare the flocks destroy
 Of these fair pastures : if ye touch, ye die.
 Warn'd by the high command of heav'n, be aw'd ;
 Holy the flocks, and dreadful is the God !
 That God who spreads the radiant beams of light, 385
 And views wide earth and heav'n's unmeasur'd height.

And now the moon had run her monthly round,
 The south-east blust'ring with a dreadful sound ;
 Unhurt the beeves, untouch'd the woolly train
 Low thro' the grove, or range the flow'ry plain : 390
 Then fail'd our food ; then fish we make our prey,
 Or fowl that screaming haunt the wat'ry way.
 Till now from sea or flood no succour found,
 Famine and meagre want besieg'd us round.
 Pensive and pale from grove to grove I stray'd, 395
 From the loud storms to find a sylvan shade ;
 There o'er my hands the living wave I pour ;
 And heav'n, and heav'n's immortal thrones adore,
 To calm the roarings of the stormy main,
 And grant me peaceful to my realms again. 400
 Then o'er my eyes the Gods soft slumber shed,
 While thus Eurylochus arising said.

O friends ! a thousand ways frail mortals lead
 To the cold tomb, and dreadful all to tread ;
 But dreadful most, when by a slow decay 405
 Pale hunger wastes the manly strength away.
 Why cease ye then t' implore the pow'rs above,
 And offer hecatombs to thund'ring Jove ?

Why

Why seize ye not yon beeves and fleecy prey ?
Arise unanimous ; arise and slay ! 410

And if the Gods ordain a safe return,
To Phœbus' shrines shall rise, and altars burn.
But should the pow'rs that o'er mankind preside,
Decree to plunge us in the whelming tide,
Better to rush at once to shades below, 415
Than linger life away, and nourish wo !

Thus he : The beeves around securely stray,
When swift to ruin they invade the prey :
They seize ; they kill ! — but for the rite divine,
The barley fail'd, and for libations, wine. 420
Swift from the oak they strip the shady pride,
And verdant leaves the flow'ry cake supply'd.

With pray'r they now address th' æthereal train,
Slay the selected beeves, and slay the slain :
The thighs, with fat involv'd, divide with art, 425
Strew'd o'er with morsels cut from ev'ry part.
Water, instead of wine, is brought in urns,
And pour'd profanely as the victim burns.
The thighs thus offer'd, and the entrails dress'd,
They roast the fragments, and prepare the feast. 430

'Twas then soft slumber fled my troubled brain ;
Back to the bark I speed along the main.
When lo ! an odour from the feast exhales,
Spreads o'er the coast, and scents the tainted gales ;
A chilly fear congeal'd my vital blood, 435
And thus obtesting heav'n I mourn'd aloud.

O fire of men and Gods, immortal Jove !
Oh all ye blissful pow'rs that reign above !
Why were my cares beguil'd in short repose ?
O fatal slumber, paid with lasting woes ! 440
A deed so dreadful all the Gods alarms,
Vengeance is on the wing, and heav'n in arms !

Meantime Lampetie mounts th' æreal way,
And kindles into rage the God of day.

Vengeance, ye pow'rs, (he cries), and thou whose hand
Aims the red bolt, and hurls the writhen brand ! 446
Slain

Slain are those herds which I with pride survey,
 When thro' the ports of heav'n I pour the day,
 Or deep in ocean plunge the burning ray.
 Vengeance, ye Gods! or I the skies forego, 450
 And bear the lamp of heav'n to shades below.

To whom the thund'ring pow'r: O source of day!
 Whose radiant lamp adorns the azure way,
 Still may thy beams through heav'n's bright portals rise,
 The joy of earth, and glory of the skies: 455
 Lo! my red arm I bare, my thunders guide,
 To dash th' offenders in the whelming tide.

To fair Calypso from the bright abodes,
 Hermes convey'd these counsels of the Gods.

Meantime from man to man my tongue exclaims, 460
 My wrath is kindled, and my soul in flames.
 In vain! I view perform'd the direful deed,
 Beeves, slain by heaps, along the ocean bleed.

Now heav'n gave signs of wrath; along the ground }
 Crept the raw hides, and with a bellowing sound 465 }
 Roar'd the dead limbs; the burning entrails groan'd. }
 Six guilty days my wretched mates employ
 In impious feasting, and unhallow'd joy;
 The seventh arose, and now the fire of Gods
 Rein'd the rough storms, and calm'd the tossing floods:
 With speed the bark we climb; the spacious sails 471
 Loos'd from the yards invite th' impelling gales.
 Past sight of shore, along the surge we bound,
 And all above is sky, and ocean all around!

When lo! a murky cloud the Thund'rer forms 475
 Full o'er our heads, and blackens heav'n with storms.
 Night dwells o'er all the deep: and now outflies
 The gloomy west, and whistles in the skies.
 The mountain-billows roar: the furious blast
 Howls o'er the shroud, and rends it from the mast: 480
 The mast gives way, and crackling as it bends,
 Tears up the deck; then all at once descends:
 The pilot by the tumbling ruin slain,
 Dash'd from the helm, falls headlong in the main.
 Then Jove in anger bids his thunders roll, 485
 And forky lightnings flash from pole to pole;

While

Fierce at our heads his deadly bolt he aims,
 Red with uncommon wrath, and wrapt in flames :
 Full on the bark it fell ; now high, now low,
 Toss'd and retoss'd, it reel'd beneath the blow ; 490
 At once into the main the crew it shook :

Sulphureous odours rose, and smould'ring smoke.
 Like fowl that haunt the floods, they sink, they rise, }
 Now lost, now seen, with shrieks and dreadful cries ; }
 And strive to gain the bark ; but Jove denies. 495 }

Firm at the helm I stand, when fierce the main
 Rush'd with dire noise, and dash'd the sides in twain ;
 Again impetuous drove the furious blast,
 Snapt the strong helm, and bore to sea the mast.

Firm to the mast with cords the helm I bind, 500 }
 And ride aloft, to providence resign'd, }
 Through tumbling billows, and a war of wind. }

Now sunk the west, and now a southern breeze,
 More dreadful than the tempest, lash'd the seas ;
 For on the rocks it bore where Scylla raves, 505
 And dire Charybdis rolls her thund'ring waves.

All night I drove ; and, at the dawn of day,
 Fast by the rocks beheld the desp'rate way :
 Just when the sea within her gulf subsides,
 And in the roaring whirlpools rush the tides. 510

Swift from the float I vaulted with a bound,
 The lofty fig-tree seiz'd, and clung around.
 So to the beam the bat tenacious clings,
 And pendent round it clasps his leathern wings.

High in the air the tree its boughs display'd, 515
 And o'er the dungeon cast a dreadful shade ;
 All unsustain'd between the wave and sky,
 Beneath my feet the whirling billows fly.

What time the judge forsakes the noisy bar
 To take repast, and stills the wordy war ; 520
 Charybdis rumbling from her inmost caves,
 The mast refunded on her reflux waves.

Swift from the tree, the floating mast to gain,
 Sudden I dropp'd amidst the flashing main ;
 Once more undaunted on the ruin rode, 525
 And oar'd with lab'ring arms along the flood.

Unseen I pass'd by Scylla's dire abodes :
 So Jove decreed, (dread fire of men and Gods).
 Then nine long days I plough'd the calmer seas,
 Heav'd by the surge, and wafted by the breeze. 530
 Weary and wet th' Ogygian shores I gain,
 When the tenth sun descended to the main.
 There in Calypso's ever-fragrant bow'rs
 Refresh'd I lay, and joy beguil'd the hours.

My following fates to thee, oh king ! are known,
 And the bright partner of thy royal throne. 536
 Enough : in misery can words avail ?
 And what so tedious as a twice-told tale ?

THE

O D Y S S E Y.

BOOK XIII.

THE ARGUMENT.

The arrival of Ulysses in Ithaca.

Ulysses takes his leave of Alcinous and Arete, and embarks in the evening. Next morning the ship arrives at Ithaca; where the sailors, as Ulysses is yet sleeping, lay him on the shore with all his treasures. On their return, Neptune changes their ship into a rock. In the mean time, Ulysses awaking, knows not his native Ithaca, by reason of a mist which Pallas had cast round him. He breaks into loud lamentations; till the Goddess appearing to him in the form of a shepherd, discovers the country to him, and points out the particular places. He then tells a feigned story of his adventures; upon which she manifests herself, and they consult together of the measures to be taken to destroy the suiters. To conceal his return, and disguise his person the more effectually, she changes him into the figure of an old beggar.

HE ceas'd ; but left so pleasing on their ear
His voice, that list'ning still they seem'd to hear.
A pause of silence hush'd the shady rooms :
The grateful conference then the king resumes.

Whatever toils the great Ulysses past,
Beneath this happy roof they end at last;
No longer now from shore to shore to roam,
Smooth seas, and gentle winds, invite him home.

But hear me, princes ! whom these walls inclose,
 For whom my chanter sings, and goblet flows 10
 With wine unmix'd, (an honour due to age,
 To cheer the grave, and warm the poet's rage).
 Though labour'd gold and many a dazzling vest
 Lie heap'd already for our godlike guest ;
 Without new treasures let him not remove, 15
 Large, and expressive of the public love :
 Each peer a tripod, each a vase bestow,
 A gen'ral tribute, which the state shall owe.

This sentence pleas'd : then all their steps address
 To sep'rate mansions, and retir'd to rest. 20

Now did the rosy-finger'd morn arise,
 And shed her sacred light along the skies.
 Down to the haven and the ships in haste
 They bore the treasures, and in safety plac'd.
 The king himself the vases rang'd with care ; 25
 Then bade his followers to the feast repair,
 A victim ox beneath the sacred hand
 Of great Alcinous falls, and stains the sand.
 To Jove th' Eternal (pow'r above all pow'rs ! 30
 Who wings the winds, and darkens heav'n with show'rs)
 The flames ascend : till ev'ning they prolong
 The rites, more sacred made by heav'nly song :
 For in the midst, with public honours grac'd,
 Thy lyre divine, Demodocus ! was plac'd.
 All, but Ulysses, heard with fix'd delight : 35
 He sat, and ey'd the sun, and wish'd the night ;
 Slow seem'd the sun to move, the hours to roll,
 His native home deep imag'd in his soul.

As the tir'd ploughman spent with stubborn toil,
 Whose oxen long have torn the furrow'd soil, 40
 Sees with delight the sun's declining ray,
 When home, with feeble knees, he bends his way
 To late repast, (the day's hard labour done) :

So to Ulysses welcome set the sun.
 Then instant, to Alcinous and the rest, 45
 (The Scherian states), he turn'd, and thus address'd.

O thou, the first in merit and command !
 And you the peers and princes of the land !

May ev'ry joy be yours ! nor this the least,
 When due libation shall have crown'd the feast, 50
 Safe to my home to send you happy guest.
 Complete are now the bounties you have giv'n,
 Be all those bounties but confirm'd by heav'n !
 So may I find, when all my wand'rings cease,
 My comfort blameless, and my friends in peace. 55
 On you be ev'ry bliss; and ev'ry day,
 In home-felt joys delighted, roll away ;
 Yourselves, your wives, your long descending race,
 May ev'ry God enrich with ev'ry grace !
 Sure fix'd on virtue may your nation stand, 60
 And public evil never touch the land !

His words well weigh'd, the gen'ral voice approv'd
 Benign, and instant his dismissal mov'd.
 The monarch to Pontonous gave the sign,
 To fill the goblet high with rosy wine : 65
 Great Jove the father first (he cry'd) implore ;
 Then send the stranger to his native shore.

The luscious wine th' obedient herald brought ;
 Around the mansion flow'd the purple draught :
 Each from his seat to each Immortal pours, 70
 Whom glory circles in th' Olympian bow'rs.
 Ulysses sole with air majestic stands,
 The bowl presenting to Arete's hands ;
 Then thus: O queen, farewell ! be still possess'd
 Of dear remembrance, blessing still and bless'd ! 75
 Till age and death shall gently call thee hence,
 (Sure fate of ev'ry mortal excellence !)
 Farewell ! and joys successive ever spring
 To thee, to thine, the people, and the king !

Thus he : then parting prints the sandy shore 80
 To the fair port : a herald march'd before,
 Sent by Alcinous : of Arete's train
 Three chosen maids attend him to the main ;
 This does a tunic and white vest convey,
 A various casket that, of rich inlay, 85
 And bread and wine the third. The cheerful mates
 Safe in the hollow poop dispose the cates :

Upon the deck, soft painted robes they spread,
 With linen cover'd, for the hero's bed.
 He climb'd the lofty stern ; then gently prest 90
 The swelling couch, and lay compos'd to rest.

Now plac'd in order, the Phæacian train
 Their cables loose, and launch into the main :
 At once they bend, and strike their equal oars,
 And leave the sinking hills, and less'ning shores. 95
 While on the deck the chief in silence lies,
 And pleasing slumbers steal upon his eyes.
 As fiery coursers in the rapid race,
 Urg'd by fierce drivers through the dusty space,
 Toss their high heads, and scour along the plain ; 100
 So mounts the bounding vessel o'er the main.
 Back to the stern the parted billows flow,
 And the black ocean foams and roars below.

Thus with spread sails the winged galley flies ;
 Less swift an eagle cuts the liquid skies : 105
 Divine Ulysses was her sacred load,
 A man, in wisdom equal to a God !
 Much danger, long and mighty toils he bore,
 In storms by sea, and combats on the shore ;
 All which soft sleep now banish'd from his breast, 110
 Wrapp'd in a pleasing, deep, and death-like rest.

But when the morning-star with early ray
 Flam'd in the front of heav'n, and promis'd day ;
 Like distant clouds the mariner descries
 Fair Ithaca's emerging hills arise. 115
 Far from the town a spacious port appears,
 Sacred to Phorcys' pow'r, whose name it bears :
 Two craggy rocks projecting to the main,
 The roaring winds tempestuous rage restrain ;
 Within, the waves in softer murmurs glide, 120
 And ships secure without their halbers ride.
 High at the head a branching olive grows,
 And crowns the pointed cliffs with shady boughs.
 Beneath, a gloomy grotto's cool recess
 Delights the Nereids of the neighb'ring seas ; 125
 Where bowls and urns were form'd of living stone,
 And massy beams in native marble shone ;

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On which the labours of the nymph were roll'd,
 Their webs divine of purple mix'd with gold.
 Within the cave, the clust'ring bees attend 130
 Their waxen works, or from the roof depend:
 Perpetual waters o'er the pavement glide;
 Two marble doors unfold on either side;
 Sacred the south, by which the Gods descend,
 But mortals enter at the northern end. 135

Thither they bent, and haul'd their ship to land,
 (The crooked keel divides the yellow sand).
 Ulysses sleeping on his couch they bore,
 And gently plac'd him on the rocky shore.
 His treasures next, Alcinous' gifts, they laid 140
 In the wild olive's unfrequented shade,
 Secure from theft: then launch'd the bark again,
 Resum'd their oars, and measur'd back the main.
 Nor yet forgot old Ocean's dread supreme
 The vengeance vow'd for eyeless Polypheme. 145
 Before the throepe of mighty Jove he stood;
 And fought the secret counsels of the God.

Shall then no more, O sire of Gods! be mine
 The rights and honours of a pow'r divine?
 Scorn'd ev'n by man, and (oh severe disgrace!) 150
 By soft Phæacians, my degen'rate race!
 Against yon destin'd head in vain I swore,
 And menac'd vengeance, ere he reach'd his shore:
 To reach his natal shore was thy decree;
 Mild I obey'd, for who shall war with thee? 155
 Behold him landed, careless and asleep,
 From all th' eluded dangers of the deep!
 Lo where he lies, amidst a shining store
 Of brass, rich garments, and refulgent ore:
 And bears triumphant to his native isle 160
 A prize more worth than Ilion's noble spoil.

To whom the father of th' immortal pow'rs,
 Who swells the clouds, and gladdens earth with show'rs:
 Can mighty Neptune thus of man complain?
 Neptune, tremendous o'er the boundless main! 165
 Rever'd and awful ev'n in heav'n's abodes,
 Ancient and great! a God above the Gods!

If that low race offend thy pow'r divine,
(Weak, daring creatures!), is not vengeance thine?
Go then, the guilty at thy will chastise. 170

He said: the shaken of the earth replies.

This then I doom; to fix the gallant ship
A mark of vengeance on the fable deep;
To warn the thoughtless self-confiding train,
No more unlicens'd thus to brave the main. 175
Full in their port a shady hill shall rise,
If such thy will. — We will it, Jove replies.
Ev'n when with transport black'ning all the strand,
The swarming people hail their ship to land,
Fix her for ever, a memorial-stone: 180

Still let her seem to sail, and seem alone;
The trembling clouds shall see the sudden shade
Of whelming mountains overhang their head!

With that, the God whose earthquakes rock the ground,
Ere to Phæacia cross'd the vast profound. 185

Swift as a swallow sweeps the liquid way,
The winged pinnace shot along the sea.
The God arrests her with a sudden stroke,
And roots her down an everlasting rock.

Aghast the Scherians stand in deep surprise; 190
All press to speak, all question with their eyes.
What hands unseen the rapid bark restrain!
And yet it swims, or seems to swim the main!

Thus they, unconscious of the deed divine:
'Till great Alcinous rising own'd the sign. 195

Behold the long predestin'd day! (he cries),
Oh certain faith of ancient prophecies!
These ears have heard my royal sire disclose
A dreadful story, big with future woes;
How mov'd with wrath, that careless we convey 200
Promiscuous ev'ry guest to ev'ry bay,
Stern Neptune rag'd; and how by his command
Firm rooted in the surge a ship should stand;
(A monument of wrath!), and mound on mound
Should hide our walls, or whelm beneath the ground. 205

The fates have follow'd as declar'd the fear:
Be humbled, nations! and your monarch hear.

No more unlicens'd brave the deeps, no more
 With ev'ry stranger pass from shore to shore ;
 On angry Neptune now for mercy call : 210
 To his high name let twelve black oxen fall.
 So may the God reverse his purpos'd will,
 Nor o'er our city hang the dreadful hill.

The monarch spoke : they trembled and obey'd,
 Forth on the sands the victim oxen led : 215
 The gather'd tribes before the altars stand,
 And chiefs and rulers, a majestic band.
 The king of Ocean all the tribes implore ;
 The blazing altars redden all the shore.

Meanwhile Ulysses in his country lay, 220
 Releas'd from sleep, and round him might survey
 The solitary shore, and rolling sea.
 Yet had his mind through tedious absence lost
 The dear remembrance of his native coast :
 Besides, Minerva, to secure her care, 225
 Diffus'd around a veil of thicken'd air :
 For so the Gods ordain'd, to keep unseen
 His royal person from his friends and queen,
 Till the proud suitors for their crimes afford
 An ample vengeance to their injurd lord. 230

Now all the land another prospect bore,
 Another port appear'd, another shore,
 And long-contin'd ways, and winding floods,
 And unknown mountains, crown'd with unknown woods.
 Pensive and slow, with sudden grief oppress'd, 235
 The king arose, and beat his careful breast,
 Cast a long look o'er all the coast and main,
 And sought, around, his native realm in vain :
 Then with erected eyes stood fix'd in wo,
 And as he spoke, the tears began to flow. 240

Ye Gods ! (he cry'd), upon what barren coast,
 In what new region is Ulysses tost ?
 Possess'd by wild barbarians fierce in arms,
 Or men whose bosom tender pity warms ?
 Where shall this treasure now in safety lie ? 245
 And whither, whither its sad owner fly ?

Ah

Ah why did I Alcinous' grace implore ?
 Ah why forsake Phæacia's happy shore ?
 Some juster prince perhaps had entertain'd,
 And safe restor'd me to my native land. 250

Is this the promis'd, long-expected coast,
 And this the faith Phæacia's rulers boast ?

Oh righteous Gods ! of all the great, how few
 Are just to heav'n, and to their promise true !

But he, the pow'r to whose all-seeing eyes 255
 The deeds of men appear without disguise,
 'Tis his alone t' avenge the wrongs I bear :
 For still th' oppress'd are his peculiar care.

To count these presents, and from thence to prove
 Their faith, is mine : the rest belongs to Jove. 260

Then on the sands he rang'd his wealthy store,
 The gold, the vests, the tripods, number'd o'er :
 All these he found, but still in error lost

Disconsolate he wanders on the coast,
 Sighs for his country, and laments again 265

To the deaf rocks, and hoarse-resounding main.
 When lo ! the guardian Goddess of the wise,

Celestial Pallas, stood before his eyes ;
 In show a youthful swain, of form divine,

Who seem'd descended from some princely line, 270
 A graceful robe her slender body drest,

Around her shoulders flew the waving vest,
 Her decent hand a shining jav'lin bore,

And painted sandals on her feet she wore.
 To whom the king : Whoe'er of human race 275

Thou art, that wander'st in this desert place !
 With joy to thee, as to some God, I bend ;

To thee my treasures and myself commend.
 O tell a wretch in exile doom'd to stray,

What air I breathe, what country I survey. ? 280
 The fruitful continent's extremest bound,

Or some fair isle which Neptune's arms surround ?
 From what fair clime (said she) remote from fame,

Arriv'st thou here a stranger to our name ?
 Thou seest an island, not to those unknown 285

Whose hills are brighten'd by the rising sun,
 Nor

Nor those that plac'd beneath his utmost reign
Behold him sinking in the western main.
The rugged soil allows no level space
For flying chariots, or the rapid race; 290
Yet not ungrateful to the peasant's pain,
Suffices fulness to the swelling grain:
The loaded trees their various fruits produce,
And clust'ring grapes afford a gen'rous juice:
Woods crown our mountains, and in ev'ry grove 295
The bounding goats and frisking heifers rove:
Soft rains and kindly dews refresh the field,
And rising springs eternal verdure yield.
Ev'n to those shores is Ithaca renown'd,
Where Troy's majestic ruins strow the ground. 300

At this, the chief with transport was possest,
His panting heart exulted in his breast:
Yet well dissembling his untimely joys,
And veiling truth in plausible disguise,
Thus, with an air sincere, in fiction bold, 305
His ready tale th' inventive hero told.

Oft have I heard, in Crete, this island's name;
For 'twas from Crete, my native soil, I came,
Self-banish'd thence. I sail'd before the wind,
And left my children and my friends behind. 310
From fierce Idomeneus' revenge I flew,
Whose son, the swift Orsilochns, I slew:
(With brutal force he seiz'd my Trojan prey,
Due to the toils of many a bloody day).
Unseen I 'scap'd; and, favour'd by the night, 315
In a Phœnician vessel took my flight,
For Pyle or Elis bound; but tempests tost,
And raging billows drove us on your coast.
In dead of night an unknown port we gain'd,
Spent with fatigue, and slept secure on land. 320
But e'er the rosy morn renew'd the day,
While in th' embrace of pleasing sleep I lay,
Sudden, invited by auspicious gales,
They land my goods, and hoist their flying sails.
Abandon'd here, my fortune I deplore, 325
A hapless exile on a foreign shore.

Thus

Thus while he spoke, the blue-ey'd maid began
 With pleasing smiles to view the godlike man :
 Then chang'd her form ; and now, divinely bright,
 Jove's heav'nly daughter stood confess'd to fight ; 330
 Like a fair virgin in her beauty's bloom,
 Skill'd in th' illustrious labours of the loom.

O still the same Ulysses ! she rejoin'd,
 In useful craft successfully refin'd !
 Artful in speech, in action, and in mind ! 335
 Suffic'd it not, that thy long labours past,
 Secure thou seest thy native shore at last ?
 But this to me ? who, like thyself, excel
 In arts of counsel, and dissembling well ;
 To me, whose wit exceeds the pow'rs divine, 340
 No less than mortals are surpass'd by thine.
 Know'st thou not me ? who made thy life my care,
 Thro' ten years wand'ring, and thro' ten years war ;
 Who taught thee arts, Alcinous to persuade,
 To raise his wonder, and engage his aid ; 345
 And now appear, thy treasures to protect,
 Conceal thy person, thy designs direct,
 And tell what more thou must from fate expect.
 Domestic woes far heavier to be born !
 The pride of fools, and slaves insulting scorn. 350
 But thou be silent, nor reveal thy state :
 Yield to the force of unresisted fate,
 And bear unmov'd the wrongs of base mankind,
 The last and hardest conquest of the mind.

Goddeſs of wiſdom ! Ithacus replies, 355
 He who diſcerns thee muſt be truly wiſe,
 So ſeldom view'd, and ever in diſguiſe !
 When the bold Argives led their warring pow'rs
 Againſt proud Ilion's well-defended tow'rs,
 Ulyſſes was thy care, celeftial maid ! 360
 Grac'd with thy ſight, and favour'd with thy aid.
 But when the Trojan piles in aſhes lay,
 And bound for Greece we plough'd the wat'ry way ;
 Our fleet diſpers'd, and driv'n from coaſt to coaſt,
 Thy ſacred preſence from that hour I loſt ; 365

Till

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Till I beheld thy radiant form once more,
 And heard thy counsels on Phæacia's shore.
 But, by th' almighty author of thy race,
 Tell me, oh tell ! is this my native place ?
 For much I fear, long tracks of land and sea 370
 Divide this coast from distant Ithaca ;
 The sweet delusion kindly you impose,
 To sooth my hopes, and mitigate my woes.

Thus he. The blue-ey'd Goddess thus replies.
 How prone to doubt, how cautious are the wise ! 375
 Who, vers'd in fortune, fear the flatt'ring show,
 And taste not half the blifs the Gods bestow.
 The more shall Pallas aid thy just desires,
 And guard the wisdom which herself inspires.
 Others, long absent from their native place, 380
 Straight seek their home, and fly with eager pace
 To their wives arms, and childrens dear embrace :

Not thus Ulysses ; he decrees to prove
 His subjects faith, and queen's suspected love ;
 Who mourn'd her lord twice ten revolving years, 385
 And wastes the days in grief, the nights in tears.
 But Pallas knew, (thy friends and navy lost),
 Once more 'twas giv'n thee to behold thy coast :

Yet how could I with adverse fate engage,
 And mighty Neptune's unrelenting rage ? 390
 Now lift thy longing eyes, while I restore
 The pleasing prospect of thy native shore.

Behold the port of Phorcys ! fenc'd around
 With rocky mountains, and with olives crown'd.
 Behold the gloomy grot ! whose cool recess 395
 Delights the Nereids of the neighb'ring seas ;
 Whose now-neglected altars, in thy reign
 Blush'd with the blood of sheep and oxen slain.
 Behold ! where Neritus the clouds divides,
 And shakes the waving forests on his sides. 400

So spake the Goddess, and the prospect clear'd,
 The mists dispers'd, and all the coast appear'd.
 The king with joy confess'd his place of birth,
 And on his knees salutes his mother earth :

† T

Then

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Then with his suppliant hands upheld in air, 405
Thus to the sea green sisters sends his pray'r.

All hail ! ye virgin-daughters of the main !
Ye streams beyond my hopes beheld again !
To you once more your own Ulysses bows ;
Attend his transports, and receive his vows ! 410
If Jove prolong my days, and Pallas crown
The growing virtues of my youthful son,
To you shall rites divine be ever paid,
And grateful off'rings on your altars laid.

Then thus Minerva : From that anxious breast 415
Dismiss those cares, and leave to heav'n the rest.
Our task be now thy treasur'd stores to save,
Deep in the close recesses of the cave :

Then future means consult. — She spoke, and trod
The shady grot, that brighten'd with the God. 420
The closest caverns of the grot she sought ;
The gold, the brass, the robes Ulysses brought ;
These in the secret gloom the chief dispos'd ;
The entrance with a rock the Goddess clos'd.

Now, seated in the olive's sacred shade, 425
Confer the hero and the martial maid.

The Goddess of the azure eyes began :
Son of Laertes ! much-experienc'd man !
The suitor-train thy earliest care demand,
Of that luxurious race to rid the land : 430
Three years thy house their lawless rule has seen,
And proud addresses to the matchless queen.
But she thy absence mourns from day to day,
And inly bleeds, and silent wastes away :
Elusive of the bridal hour, she gives 435
Fond hopes to all, and all with hopes deceives.

To this Ulysses : Oh celestial maid !
Prais'd be thy counsel, and thy timely aid :
Else had I seen my native walls in vain,
Like great Atrides just restor'd and slain. 440
Vouchsafe the means of vengeance to debate,
And plan with all thy arts the scene of fate.
Then, then be present, and my soul inspire,
As when we wrapt Troy's heav'n-built walls in fire.
Though

Though leagu'd against me hundred heroes stand, 445
 Hundreds shall fall, if Pallas aid my hand.

She answer'd : In the dreadful day of fight
 Know I am with thee, strong in all my might.
 If thou but equal to thyself be found,
 What gasping numbers then shall press the ground ! 450
 What human victims stain the feastful floor !
 How wide the pavements float with guilty gore !
 It fits thee now to wear a dark disguise,
 And secret walk, unknown to mortal eyes.
 For this, my hand shall wither ev'ry grace, 455
 And ev'ry elegance of form and face ;
 O'er thy smooth skin a bark of wrinkles spread,
 Turn hoar the auburn honours of thy head,
 Disfigure ev'ry limb with coarse attire,
 And in thy eyes extinguish all the fire ; 460
 Add all the wants and the decays of life,
 Estrange thee from thy own, thy son, thy wife :
 From the loath'd object ev'ry sight shall turn,
 And the blind suitors their destruction scorn.

Go first the master of thy herds to find, 465
 True to his charge, a loyal swain and kind :
 For thee he fights ; and to the royal heir
 And chaste Penelope extends his care.
 At the Coracian rock he now resides,
 Where Arethusa's sable water glides ; 470
 The sable water and the copious mast
 Swell the fat herd ; luxuriant, large repast !
 With him rest peaceful in the rural cell,
 And all you ask his faithful tongue shall tell.
 Me into other realms my cares convey, 475
 To Sparta, still with female beauty gay :
 For know, to Sparta thy lov'd offspring came,
 To learn thy fortunes from the voice of fame.

At this the father, with a father's care :
 Must he too suffer ? he, oh Goddess ! bear 480
 Of wand'rings and of woes a wretched share ?
 Through the wild ocean plough the dang'rous way,
 And leave his fortunes and his house a prey ?

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Why wouldst not thou, oh all-enlighten'd mind !
Inform him certain, and protect him, kind ? 485

To whom Minerva : Be thy soul at rest ;
And know, whatever heav'n ordains, is best.
To fame I sent him, to acquire renown :
To other regions is his virtue known.

Secure he sits, near great Atrides plac'd ; 490
With friendships strengthen'd, and with honours grac'd.
But lo ! an ambush waits his passage o'er :
Fierce foes insidious intercept the shore :
In vain ! far sooner all the murd'rous brood
This injur'd land shall fatten with their blood. 495

She spake : then touch'd him with her pow'rful wand :
The skin shrunk up, and wither'd at her hand :
A swift old age o'er all his members spread ;
A sudden frost was sprinkled on his head ;
Nor longer in the heavy eye-ball shin'd 500
The glance divine, forth-beaming from the mind.

His robe, which spots indelible befear,
In rags dishonest flutters with the air :
A stag's torn hide is lapt around his reins ;
A rugged staff his trembling hand sustains ; 505
And at his side a wretched scrip was hung,
Wide-patch'd, and knotted to a twisted thong.
So look'd the chief, so mov'd ! to mortal eyes
Object uncouth ! a man of miseries !
While Pallas, cleaving the wide fields of air, 510
To Sparta flies, Telemachus her care.

T H E
O D Y S S E Y.

B O O K XIV.

T H E A R G U M E N T.

The conversation with Eumæus.

Ulysses arrives in disguise at the house of Eumæus; where he is received, entertained, and lodged, with the utmost hospitality. The several discourses of that faithful old servant, with the feigned story told by Ulysses to conceal himself, and other conversations on various subjects, take up this entire book.

BUT he, deep-musing, o'er the mountains stray'd
Through mazy thickets of the woodland shade,
And cavern'd ways, the shaggy coast along,
With cliffs and nodding forests over-hung.
Eumæus at his sylvan lodge he sought, 5
A faithful servant, and without a fault.
Ulysses found him busied, as he sat
Before the threshold of his rustic gate.
Around, the mansion in a circle shone;
A rural portico of rugged stone: 10
(In absence of his lord, with honest toil
His own industrious hands had rais'd the pile):
The wall was stone from neighb'ring quarries born,
Encircled with a fence of native thorn,
And strong with pales, by many a weary stroke 15
Of stubborn labour hewn from heart of oak;
Frequent and thick. Within the space were rear'd
Twelve ample cells, the lodgment of his herd.

Full fifty pregnant females each contain'd ;
 The males without (a smaller race) remain'd ; 20
 Doom'd to supply the suitors wasteful feast,
 A stock by daily luxury decreast ;
 Now scarce four hundred left. These to defend,
 Four savage dogs, a watchful guard, attend.
 Here sat Eumæus, and his cares apply'd 25
 To form strong buskins of well season'd hide.
 Of four assistants who his labour share,
 Three now were absent on the rural care ;
 The fourth drove victims to the suitor-train :
 But he, of ancient faith, a simple swain, 30
 Sigh'd, while he furnish'd the luxurious board,
 And weary'd heav'n with wishes for his lord. —

Soon as Ulysses near th' inclosure drew,
 With open mouths the furious mastives flew :
 Down sat the sage ; and, cautious to withstand, 35
 Let fall th' offensive truncheon from his hand.
 Sudden, the master runs ; aloud he calls ;
 And from his hasty hand the leather falls ;
 With show'rs of stones he drives them far away ;
 The scatt'ring dogs around at distance bay. 40

Unhappy stranger ! (thus the faithful swain
 Began with accent gracious and humane),
 What sorrow had been mine, if at my gate
 Thy rev'rend age had met a shameful fate ?
 Enough of woes already have I known ; 45
 Enough my master's sorrows and my own.
 While here (ungrateful task !) his herds I feed,
 Ordain'd for lawless rioters to bleed ;
 Perhaps supported at another's board,
 Far from his country roams my hapless lord ! 50
 Or sigh'd in exile forth his latest breath,
 Now cover'd with th' eternal shade of death !

But enter this my homely roof, and see
 Our woods not void of hospitality.
 Then tell me whence thou art, and what the share 55
 Of woes and wand'rings thou wert born to bear ?

He said ; and seconding the kind request,
 With friendly step precedes his unknown guest.

A shaggy goat's soft hide beneath him spread,
And with fresh rushes heap'd an ample bed. 60
Joy touch'd the hero's tender soul, to find
So just reception from a heart so kind :
And oh, ye Gods ! with all your blessings grace
(He thus broke forth) this friend of human race !

The swain reply'd : It never was our guise 65
To slight the poor, or aught humane despise.
For Jove unfolds our hospitable door ;
'Tis Jove that sends the stranger and the poor.
Little, alas ! is all the good I can ;

A man oppress'd, dependent, yet a man : 70
Accept such treatment as a swain affords,
Slave to the insolence of youthful lords !
Far hence is by unequal Gods remov'd
That man of bounties, loving and belov'd !

To whom whate'er his slave enjoys is ow'd ; 75
And more, had fate allow'd, had been bestow'd :
But fate condemn'd him to a foreign shore ;
Much have I sorrow'd, but my master more.
Now cold he lies, to death's embrace resign'd :
Ah perish Helen ! perish all her kind ! 80
For whose curs'd cause, in Agamemnon's name,
He trod so fatally the paths of fame.

His vest succinct then girding round his waste,
Forth rush'd the swain with hospitable haste,
Straight to the lodgments of his herd he run, 85
Where the fat porkers slept beneath the sun :
Of two, his cutlace lanc'd the spouting blood ;
These quarter'd, sing'd, and fix'd on forks of wood,
All hasty on the hissing coals he threw ;

And smoking back the tasteful viands drew, 90
Broachers and all ; then on the board display'd
The ready meal, before Ulysses laid

With flour imbrown'd ; next mingled wine yet new,
And luscious as the bees nectareous dew :
Then sat companion of the friendly feast, 95
With open look ; and thus bespoke his guest.

Take with free welcome what our hands prepare,
Such food as falls to simple servants share :

The

The best our lords consume ; those thoughtless peers,
 Rich without bounty, guilty without fears ! 100
 Yet sure the Gods their impious acts detest,
 And honour justice and the righteous breast.
 Pirates and conquerors, of harden'd mind,
 The foes of peace, and scourges of mankind,
 To whom offending men are made a prey, 105
 When Jove in vengeance gives a land away ;
 Ev'n these, when of their ill-got spoils possess'd,
 Find sure tormentors in the guilty breast ;
 Some voice of God close whispering from within,
 " Wretch ! this is villany, and this is sin." 110
 But these, no doubt, some oracle explore,
 That tells, the great Ulysses is no more.
 Hence springs their confidence, and from our sighs
 Their rapine strengthens, and their riots rise :
 Constant as Jove the night and day bestows, 115
 Bleeds a whole hecatomb, a vintage flows.
 None match'd this hero's wealth, of all who reign
 O'er the fair islands of the neighb'ring main.
 Nor all the monarchs whose far-dreaded sway
 The wide-extended continents obey : 120
 First, on the main-land, of Ulysses' breed
 Twelve herds, twelve flocks, on ocean's margin feed ;
 As many stalls for shaggy goats are rear'd ;
 As many lodgments for the tusky herd ;
 Those foreign keepers guard : and here are seen 125
 Twelve herds of goats that graze our utmost green ;
 To native pastors is their charge assign'd,
 And mine the care to feed the bristly kind :
 Each day the fattest bleeds of either herd,
 All to the suitors wasteful board preferr'd. 130
 Thus he, benevolent : his unknown guest
 With hunger keen devours the sav'ry feast ;
 While schemes of vengeance ripen in his breast.
 Silent and thoughtful while the board he ey'd,
 Eumæus pours on high the purple tide ; 135
 The king with smiling looks his joy express'd,
 And thus the kind inviting host address'd.

Say

Say now, what man is he, the man deplor'd,
 So rich, so potent, whom you style your lord ;
 Late with such affluence and possessions blest, 140
 And now in honour's glorious bed at rest ?
 Whoever was the warrior, he must he
 To fame no stranger, nor perhaps to me ;
 Who (so the Gods, and so the fates ordain'd)
 Have wander'd many a sea, and many a land. 145

Small is the faith the prince and queen ascribe
 (Reply'd Eumæus) to the wand'ring tribe :
 For needy strangers still to flatt'ry fly,
 And want too oft betrays the tongue to lie.
 Each vagrant traveller that touches here, 150
 Deludes with fallacies the royal ear,
 To dear remembrance makes his image rise,
 And calls the springing sorrows from her eyes.
 Such thou mayst be. But he whose name you crave
 Moulders in earth, or welters on the wave, 155
 Or food for fish, or dogs, his relics lie,
 Or torn by birds are scatter'd through the sky.
 So perish'd he ; and left (for ever lost)
 Much woe to all, but sure to me the most.

So mild a master never shall I find : 160
 Less dear the parents whom I left behind,
 Less soft my mother, less my father kind.
 Not with such transport would my eyes run o'er,
 Again to hail them in their native shore,
 As lov'd Ulysses once more to embrace, 165
 Restor'd and breathing in his natal place.
 That name, for ever dread, yet ever dear,
 Ev'n in his absence I pronounce with fear :
 In my respect he bears a prince's part,
 But lives a very brother in my heart. 170

Thus spoke the faithful swain ; and thus rejoin'd
 The master of his grief, the man of patient mind.
 Ulysses, friend ! shall view his old abodes,
 (Distrustful as thou art), nor doubt the Gods.
 Nor speak I rashly, but with faith averr'd, 175
 And what I speak attesting heav'n has heard.

If so, a cloak and vesture be my meed :
 Till his return no title shall I plead,
 Though certain be my news, and great my need.
 Whom want itself can force untruths to tell, 180
 My soul detests him as the gates of hell.

Thou first be witness, hospitable Jove !
 And ev'ry God inspiring social love !
 And witness ev'ry household pow'r that waits
 Guard of these fires, and angel of these gates ! 185
 Ere the next moon increase, or this decay,
 His ancient realms Ulysses shall survey,
 In blood and dust each proud oppressor mourn,
 And the lost glories of his house return.

Nor shall that meed be thine, nor ever more 190
 Shall lov'd Ulysses hail this happy shore,
 (Reply'd Eumæus) : to the present hour
 Now turn thy thought, and joys within our pow'r.
 From sad reflection let my soul repose ;
 The name of him awakes a thousand woes. 195

But guard him, Gods ! and to these arms restore !
 Not his true consort can desire him more ;
 Not old Laertes, broken with despair ;
 Not young Telemachus, his blooming heir.
 Alas, Telemachus ! my sorrows flow 200

Afresh for thee, my second cause of wo !
 Like some fair plant set by a heav'nly hand,
 He grew, he flourish'd, and he bless'd the land ;
 In all the youth his father's image shin'd,
 Bright in his person, brighter in his mind. 205

What man or God deceiv'd his better sense,
 Far on the swelling seas to wander hence ?
 To distant Pylos, hapless ! is he gone,
 To seek his father's fate, and find his own !
 For traitors wait his way, with dire design 210
 To end at once the great Arcean line.

But let us leave him to their wills above ;
 The fates of men are in the hand of Jove.
 And now, my venerable guest ! declare
 Your name, your parents, and your native air : 215

Sincere

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Sincere from whence begun your course relate,
And to what ship I owe the friendly freight ?

Thus he : and thus (with prompt invention bold)
The cautious chief his ready story told.

On dark reserve what better can prevail, 220

Or from the fluent tongue produce the tale,

Than when two friends, alone, in peaceful place

Confer, and wines and cates the table grace ;

But most the kind inviter's cheerful face ?

Thus might we sit, with social goblets crown'd, 225

Till the whole circle of the year goes round ;

Not the whole circle of the year would close

My long narration of a life of woes.

But such was heav'n's high will ! Know then, I came

From sacred Crete, and from a fire of fame : 230

Castor Hylacides (that name he bore)

Belov'd and honour'd in his native shore ;

Bless'd in his riches, in his children more.

Sprung of a handmaid, from a bought embrace,

I shar'd his kindness with his lawful race : 235

But when that fate which all must undergo,

From earth remov'd him to the shades below,

The large domain his greedy sons divide,

And each was portion'd as the lots decide.

Little, alas ! was left my wretched share, 240

Except a house, a covert from the air.

But what by niggard fortune was deny'd,

A willing widow's copious wealth supply'd.

My valour was my plea, a gallant mind,

That, true to honour, never lagg'd behind, 245

(The sex is ever to a soldier kind).

Now wasting years my former strength confound,

And added woes have bow'd me to the ground ;

Yet by the stubble you may guess the grain,

And mark the ruins of no vulgar man. 250

Me Pallas gave to lead the martial storm,

And the fair ranks of battle to deform ;

Me Mars inspir'd to turn the foe to flight,

And tempt the secret ambush of the night.

Let

Let ghastly death in all his forms appear, 253
 I saw him not ; it was not mine to fear.
 Before the rest I rais'd my ready steel ;
 The first I met, he yielded, or he fell.
 But works of peace my soul disdain'd to bear,
 The rural labour, or domestic care. 260
 To raise the mast, the missile dart to wing,
 And send swift arrows from the bounding string,
 Were arts the Gods made grateful to my mind ;
 Those Gods, who turn (to various ends design'd)
 The various thoughts and talents of mankind. 265 }
 Before the Grecians touch'd the Trojan plain,
 Nine times commander or by land or main,
 In foreign fields I spread my glory far,
 Great in the praise, rich in the spoils of war :
 Thence charg'd with riches, as increas'd in fame, 270
 To Crete return'd, an honourable name.
 But when great Jove that direful war decreed,
 Which rous'd all Greece, and made the mighty bleed ;
 Our states myself and Idomen employ
 To lead their fleets, and carry death to Troy. 275
 Nine years we warr'd, the tenth saw Ilion fall ;
 Homeward we sail'd, but heav'n dispers'd us all.
 One only month my wife enjoy'd my stay ;
 So will'd the God who gives and takes away.
 Nine ships I mann'd, equipp'd with ready stores, 280
 Intent to voyage to th' Egyptian shores ;
 In feast and sacrifice my chosen train
 Six days consum'd ; the seventh we plough'd the main.
 Crete's ample fields diminish to our eye ;
 Before the Boreal blasts the vessels fly ; 285
 Safe through the level seas we sweep our way ;
 The steerman governs, and the ships obey.
 The fifth fair morn we stem th' Egyptian tide,
 And tilting o'er the bay the vessels ride :
 To anchor there my fellows I command, 290
 And spies commission to explore the land.
 But sway'd by lust of gain, and headlong will,
 The coasts they ravage, and the natives kill.

The

The spreading clamour to their city flies,
 And horse and foot in mingled tumult rise. 295
 The redd'ning dawn reveals the circling fields
 Horrid with bristly spears, and glancing shields.
 Jove thunder'd on their side. Our guilty head
 We turn'd to flight; the gath'ring vengeance spread }
 On all parts round, and heaps on heaps lay dead. 300
 I then explor'd my thought, what course to prove?
 (And sure the thought was dictated by Jove;
 Oh had he left me to that happier doom,
 And sav'd a life of miseries to come !)
 The radiant helmet from my brows unlac'd, 305
 And low on earth my shield and javelin cast,
 I meet the monarch with a suppliant's face,
 Approach his chariot, and his knees embrace.
 He heard, he sav'd, he plac'd me at his side;
 My state he pity'd, and my tears he dry'd, 310
 Restrain'd the rage the vengeful foe express'd,
 And turn'd the deadly weapons from my breast.
 Pious ! to guard the hospitable rite,
 And fearing Jove, whom mercy's works delight.
 In Egypt thus with peace and plenty blest, 315
 I liv'd (and happy still had liv'd) a guest.
 On sev'n bright years successive blessings wait;
 The next chang'd all the colour of my fate.
 A false Phœnician, of insidious mind,
 Vers'd in vile arts, and foe to human kind, 320
 With semblance fair invites me to his home;
 I seiz'd the proffer (ever fond to roam):
 Domestic in his faithless roof I stay'd,
 Till the swift sun his annual circle made.
 To Lybia then he meditates the way, 325
 With guileful art a stranger to betray,
 And sell to bondage in a foreign land.
 Much doubting, yet compell'd, I quit the strand.
 Through the mid seas the nimble pinnace sails,
 Aloof from Crete, before the northern gales: 330
 But when remote her chalky cliffs we lost,
 And far from ken of any other coast,

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When all was wild expanse of sea and air,
 Then doom'd high Jove due vengeance to prepare.
 He hung a night of horrors o'er their head, 335
 (The shaded ocean blacken'd as it spread);
 He lanc'd the fiery bolt; from pole to pole
 Broad burst the lightnings, deep the thunders roll;
 In giddy rounds the whirling ship is tost,
 And all in clouds of smoth'ring sulphur lost. 340
 As from a hanging rock's tremendous height,
 The sable crows with intercepted flight
 Drop endlong; scar'd, and black with sulph'rous hue:
 So from the deck are hurl'd the ghastly crew.
 Such end the wicked found! But Jove's intent 345
 Was yet to save th' oppress'd and innocent.
 Plac'd on the mast (the last recourse of life),
 With winds and waves I held unequal strife;
 For nine long days the billows tilting o'er,
 The tenth soft wafts me to Thesprotia's shore. 350
 The monarch's son a shipwreck'd wretch reliev'd,
 The fire with hospitable rites receiv'd,
 And in his palace like a brother plac'd,
 With gifts of price and gorgeous garments grac'd.
 While here I sojourn'd, oft I heard the fame 355
 How late Ulysses to the country came;
 How lov'd, how honour'd in this court he stay'd,
 And here his whole collected treasure laid:
 I saw myself the vast unnumber'd store
 Of steel elab'rate, and refulgent ore, 360
 And brass high heap'd, amidst the regal dome;
 Immense supplies for ages yet to come!
 Meantime he voyag'd to explore the will
 Of Jove on high Dodona's holy hill,
 What means might best his safe return avail, 365
 To come in pomp, or bear a secret sail?
 Full oft has Phidon, whilst he pour'd the wine,
 Attesting solemn all the pow'rs divine,
 That soon Ulysses would return, declar'd,
 The sailors waiting, and the ships prepar'd. 370
 But first the king dismiss'd me from his shores,
 For fair Dulichium crown'd with fruitful stores;

To

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To good Acastus' friendly care consign'd :
 But other counsels pleas'd the sailors mind :
 New frauds were plotted by the faithless train, 375
 And misery demands me once again.

Soon as remote from shore they plough the wave,
 With ready hands they rush to seize their slave ;
 Then with these tatter'd rags they wrapt me round,
 (Stript of my own), and to the vessel bound. 380

At eve, at Ithaca's delightful land
 The ship arriv'd : forth issuing on the sand,
 They sought repast ; while, to th' unhappy kind,
 The pitying Gods themselves my chains unbind.

Soft I descended, to the sea apply'd 385

My naked breast, and shot along the tide.
 Soon past beyond their sight, I left the flood,
 And took the spreading shelter of the wood.

Their prize escap'd the faithless pirates mourn'd ;
 But deem'd inquiry vain, and to their ship return'd. 390

Screen'd by protecting Gods from hostile eyes,
 They led me to a good man and a wife ;
 To live beneath thy hospitable care,
 And wait the woes heav'n dooms me yet to bear.

Unhappy guest ! whose sorrows touch my mind ! 395
 (Thus good Eumæus with a sigh rejoin'd) ;

For real suff'rings since I grieve sincere,
 Check not with fallacies the springing tear ;
 Nor turn the passion into groundless joy
 For him, whom heav'n has destin'd to destroy. 400

Oh ! had he perish'd on some well-fought day,
 Or in his friends embraces dy'd away !
 That grateful Greece with streaming eyes might raise
 Historic marbles, to record his praise :

His praise, eternal on the faithful stone, 405
 Had with transmissive honours grac'd his son.

Now snatch'd by harpies to the dreary coast,
 Sunk is the hero, and his glory lost !

While pensive in this solitary den,
 Far from gay cities, and the ways of men, 410

I linger life ; nor to the court repair,
 But when the constant queen commands my care ;

Or when, to taste her hospitable board,
 Some guest arrives, with rumours of her lord;
 And these indulge their want, and those their wo, 415
 And here the tears, and there the goblets flow.
 By many such have I been warn'd; but chief
 By one Ætolian robb'd of all belief,
 Whose hap it was to this our roof to roam,
 For murder banish'd from his native home, 420
 He swore, Ulysses on the coast of Crete
 Staid but a season to refit his fleet;
 A few revolving months should waft him o'er,
 Fraught with bold warriors, and a boundless store.
 O thou! whom age has taught to understand, 425
 And heav'n has guided with a fav'ring hand!
 On God or mortal to obtrude a lie
 Forbear, and dread to flatter, as to die.
 Not for such ends my house and heart are free,
 But dear respect to Jove, and charity. 430

And why, oh swain of unbelieving mind!
 (Thus quick reply'd the wisest of mankind),
 Doubt you my oath? yet more my faith to try,
 A solemn compact let us ratify,
 And witness ev'ry pow'r that rules the sky! 435
 If here Ulysses from his labours rest,
 Be then my prize a tunic and a vest;
 And, where my hopes invite me, straight transport
 In safety to Dulichium's friendly court.
 But if he greets not thy desiring eye, 440
 Hurl me from yon dread precipice on high;
 The due reward of fraud and perjury.

Doubtless, oh guest! great land and praise were mine,
 (Reply'd the swain for spotless faith divine),
 If, after social rites and gifts bestow'd, 445
 I stain'd my hospitable hearth with blood.
 How would the Gods my righteous toils succeed,
 And bless the hand that made a stranger bleed?
 No more — th' approaching hours of silent night
 First claim refection, then to rest invite; 450
 Beneath our humble cottage let us haste,
 And here, unenvy'd, rural dainties taste.

Thus

Thus commun'd these ; while to their lowly dome
 The full-fed swine return'd with ev'ning home ;
 Compell'd, reluctant, to their sev'ral sties, 455
 With din obstrep'rous, and ungrateful cries.
 Then to the slaves : — Now from the herd the best
 Select, in honour of our foreign guest :
 With him, let us the genial banquet share,
 For great and many are the griefs we bear ; 460
 While those who from our labours heap their board,
 Blaspheme their feeder, and forget their lord.

Thus speaking, with dispatchful hand he took
 A weighty axe, and cleft the solid oak ;
 This on the earth he pil'd ; a boar full fed 465
 Of five years age, before the pile was led :
 The swain, whom acts of piety delight,
 Observant of the Gods, begins the rite ;
 First shears the forehead of the bristly boar,
 And suppliant stands, invoking ev'ry pow'r 470
 To speed Ulysses to his native shore.
 A knotty stake then aiming at his head,
 Down dropp'd he groaning, and the spirit fled.
 The scorching flames climb round on ev'ry side :
 Then the sing'd members they with skill divide ; 475
 On these, in rolls of fat involv'd with art,
 The choicest morsels lay from ev'ry part.
 Some in the flames, bestrow'd with flour, they threw :
 Some cut in fragments, from the forks they drew :
 These while on sev'ral tables they dispose, 480
 As priest himself the blameless rustic rose ;
 Expert the destin'd victim to dispart
 In seven just portions, pure of hand and heart.
 One sacred to the nymphs apart they lay ;
 Another to the winged son of May ; 485
 The rural tribe in common share the rest,
 The king the chine, the honour of the feast,
 Who sat delighted at his servant's board ;
 The faithful servant joy'd his unknown lord.
 Oh be thou dear (Ulysses cry'd) to Jove, 490
 As well thou claim'st a grateful stranger's love !

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Be then thy thanks, (the bounteous swain reply'd),
 Enjoyment of the good the Gods provide.
 From God's own hand descend our joys and woes ;
 These he decrees, and he but suffers those : 495
 All pow'r is his, and whatsoe'er he wills,
 The will itself, omnipotent, fulfills.

'This said, the first-fruits to the Gods he gave ;
 Then pour'd of offer'd wine the sable wave :
 In great Ulysses' hand he plac'd the bowl ; 500
 He sat, and sweet refection cheer'd his soul.
 The bread from canisters Mefaulius gave,
 (Eumæus' proper treasure bought this slave,
 And led from Taphos, to attend his board,
 A servant added to his absent lord). 505

His task it was the wheaten loaves to lay,
 And from the banquet take the bowls away.
 And now the rage of hunger was represt,
 And each betakes him to his couch to rest.

Now came the night, and darkness cover'd o'er 510
 The face of things ; the winds began to roar ;
 The driving storm the wat'ry west-wind pours,
 And Jove descends in deluges of show'rs.
 Studious of rest and warmth, Ulysses lies,
 Foreseeing from the first the storm would rise ; 515
 In mere necessity of coat and cloak,
 With artful preface to his host he spoke.

Hear me, my friends ! who this good banquet grace ;
 'Tis sweet to play the fool in time and place ;
 And wine can of their wits the wise beguile, 520
 Make the sage frolic, and the serious smile,
 The grave in merry measures frisk about,
 And many a long repented word bring out.
 Since to be talkative I now commence,
 Let wit cast off the sullen yoke of sense. 525

Once I was strong, (would heav'n restore those days !),
 And with my betters claim'd a share of praise.
 Ulysses, Menelaus led forth a band,
 And join'd me with them, ('twas their own command) ;
 A deathful ambush for the foe to lay, 530
 Beneath Troy walls by night we took our way :

There,

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There, clad in arms, along the marshes spread,
 We made the osier-fringed bank our bed.
 Full soon th' inclemency of heav'n I feel ;
 Nor had these shoulders cov'ring, but of steel. 535
 Sharp blew the north ; snow whit'ning all the fields
 Froze with the blast, and gath'ring glaz'd our shields.
 There all but I, well fenc'd with cloak and vest,
 Lay cover'd by their ample shields at rest.

Fool that I was ! I left behind my own ; 540
 The skill of weather and of winds unknown,
 And trusted to my coat and shield alone !
 When now was wasted more than half the night,
 And the stars faded at approaching light ;
 Sudden I jogg'd Ulysses, who was laid 545
 Fast by my side, and shiv'ring thus I said.

Here longer in this field I cannot lie,
 The winter pinches, and with cold I die,
 And die asham'd (oh wisest of mankind !)
 The only fool who left his cloak behind. 550

He thought, and answer'd : hardly waking yet,
 Sprung in his mind the momentary wit ;
 (That wit, which or in council or in fight,
 Still met th' emergence, and determin'd right).
 Hush thee, he cry'd, (soft whisp'ring in my ear), 555
 Speak not a word, lest any Greek may hear——
 And then (supporting on his arm his head)
 Hear me, companions ! (thus aloud he said) ;
 Methinks too distant from the fleet we lie :
 Ev'n now a vision stood before my eye, 560
 And sure the warning vision was from high :
 Let from among us some swift courier rise,
 Haste to the gen'ral, and demand supplies.

Up started Thoas straight, Andraemon's son :
 Nimble he rose, and cast his garment down ; 565
 Instant the racer vanish'd off the ground ;
 That instant in his cloak I wrapp'd me round :
 And safe I slept, till brightly-dawning shone
 The morn, conspicuous on her golden throne.

Oh were my strength as then, as then my age ! 570
 Some friend would fence me from the winter's rage.

Yet

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Yet tatter'd as I look, I challeng'd then
 The honours and the offices of men ;
 Some master, or some servant would allow
 A cloak and vest — but I am nothing now ! 575
 Well hast thou spoke, (rejoin'd th' attentive swain),
 Thy lips let fall no idle word or vain !
 Nor garment shalt thou want, nor aught beside,
 Meet, for the wand'ring suppliant to provide.
 But in the morning take thy cloaths again, 580
 For here one vest suffices ev'ry swain ;
 No change of garments to our hinds is known :
 But when return'd, the good Ulysses' son
 With better hand shall grace with fit attires
 His guest, and send thee where thy soul desires. 585
 The honest herdsman rose, as this he said,
 And drew before the hearth the stranger's bed :
 The fleecy spoils of sheep, a goat's rough hide
 He spreads ; and adds a mantle thick and wide ;
 With store to heap above him, and below, 590
 And guard each quarter as the tempests blow.
 There lay the king, and all the rest supine ;
 All, but the careful master of the swine :
 Forth hasted he to tend his bristly care ;
 Well arm'd, and fenc'd against nocturnal air ; 595
 His weighty faulchion o'er his shoulder ty'd :
 His shaggy cloak a mountain-goat supply'd :
 With his broad spear, the dread of dogs and men,
 He seeks his lodging in the rocky den.
 There to the tusky herd he bends his way, 600
 Where screen'd from Boreas, high o'er-arch'd they lay.

ODYSSEY.

BOOK XV.

THE ARGUMENT.

The return of Telemachus.

The Goddess Minerva commands Telemachus in a vision to return to Ithaca. Pisistratus and he take leave of Menelaus, and arrive at Pylos, where they part; and Telemachus sets sail, after having received on board Theoclymenus the soothsayer. The scene then changes to the cottage of Eumæus, who entertains Ulysses with a recital of his adventures. In the mean time Telemachus arrives on the coast, and sending the vessel to the town, proceeds by himself to the lodge of Eumæus.

NOW had Minerva reach'd those ample plains,
Fam'd for the dance where Menelaüs reigns;
Anxious she flies to great Ulysses' heir,
His instant voyage challeng'd all her care.
Beneath the royal portico display'd, 5
With Nestor's son, Telemachus was laid:
In sleep profound the son of Nestor lies;
Not thine, Ulysses! care unseal'd his eyes:
Restless he griev'd, with various fears oppress'd,
And all thy fortunes roll'd within his breast. 10
When, O Telemachus! (the Goddess said),
Too long in vain, too widely hast thou stray'd,
Thus leaving careless thy paternal right
The robbers prize, the prey to lawless might.

On fond pursuits neglectful while you roam, 15
 Ev'n now the hand of rapine sacks the dome.
 Hence to Atrides; and his leave implore
 To launch thy vessel for thy natal shore :
 Fly, whilst thy mother virtuous yet withstands
 Her kindred's wishes, and her sire's commands; 20
 Through both, Eurymachus pursues the dame,
 And with the noblest gifts asserts his claim.
 Hence therefore, while thy stores thy own remain;
 Thou know'st the practice of the female train,
 Lost in the children of the present spouse, 25
 They slight the pledges of their former vows;
 Their love is always with the lover past;
 Still the succeeding flame expels the last.
 Let o'er thy house some chosen maid preside,
 Till heav'n decrees to bless thee in a bride. 30
 But now thy more attentive ears incline,
 Observe the warnings of a pow'r divine:
 For thee their snares the suitor-lords shall lay
 In Samos' sands, or straits of Ithaca;
 To seize thy life shall lurk the murd'rous band, 35
 Ere yet thy footsteps press thy native land.
 No ——— sooner far their riot and their lust
 All-cov'ring earth shall bury deep in dust!
 Then distant from the scatter'd islands steer,
 Nor let the night retard thy full career; 40
 Thy heav'nly guardian shall instruct the gales
 To smooth thy passage, and supply thy sails:
 And when at Ithaca thy labour ends,
 Send to the town thy vessel with thy friends,
 But seek thou first the master of the swine, 45
 (For still to thee his loyal thoughts incline);
 There pass the night: while he his course pursues
 To bring Penelope the wish'd-for news,
 That thou safe sailing from the Pylian strand,
 Art come to bless her in thy native land. 50
 Thus spoke the Goddess, and resum'd her flight
 To the pure regions of eternal light.
 Meanwhile Pisistratus he gently shakes,
 And with these words the slumb'ring youth awakes:

Rise,

Rise, son of Nestor ! for the road prepare, 55
And join the harness'd coursers to the car.

What cause, he cry'd, can justify our flight,
To tempt the dangers of forbidding night ?
Here wait we rather, till approaching day
Shall prompt our speed, and point the ready way. 60
Nor think of flight before the Spartan king
Shall bid farewell, and bounteous presents bring ;
Gifts, which to distant ages safely stor'd,
The sacred act of friendship shall record. 64

Thus he. But when the dawn bestreak'd the east,
The king from Helen rose, and sought his guest.
As soon as his approach the hero knew,
The splendid mantle round him first he threw,
Then o'er his ample shoulders whirl'd the cloak,
Respectful met the monarch, and bespoke. 70

Hail, great Atrides ! favour'd of high Jove !
Let not thy friends in vain for licence move.
Swift let us measure back the wat'ry way,
Nor check our speed, impatient of delay.

If with desire so strong thy bosom glows, 75
Ill, said the king, should I thy wish oppose ;
For oft in others freely I reprove
The ill-tim'd efforts of officious love ;
Who love too much, hate in the like extreme,
And both the golden mean alike condemn. 80

Alike he thwarts the hospitable end,
Who drives the free, or stays the hasty friend ;
True friendship's laws are by this rule express'd,
Welcome the coming, speed the parting guest.
Yet stay, my friends ! and in your chariot take 85
The noblest presents that our love can make :

Meantime commit we to our womens care
Some choice domestic viands to prepare ;
The trav'ler rising from the banquet gay,
Eludes the labours of the tedious way. 90

Then if a wider course shall rather please,
Through spacious Argos, and the realms of Greece,
Atrides in his chariot shall attend,
Himself thy convoy to each royal friend.

No prince will let Ulysses' heir remove 95
 Without some pledge, some monument of love ;
 These will the caldron, these the tripod give,
 From those the well-pair'd mules we shall receive,
 Or bowl emboss'd, whose golden figures live. }

To whom the youth, for prudence fam'd, reply'd :
 O monarch, care of heav'n ! thy people's pride ! 101
 No friend in Ithaca my place supplies,
 No pow'rful hands are there, no watchful eyes :
 My stores expos'd, and fenceless house demand
 The speediest succour from my guardian hand ; 105
 Lest, in a search too anxious and too vain
 Of one joy lost, I lose what yet remain.

His purpose when the gen'rous warrior heard,
 He charg'd the household cates to be prepar'd.
 Now with the dawn, from his adjoining home, 110
 Was Boethœdes Eteonus come ;
 Swift as the word he forms the rising blaze,
 And o'er the coals the smoking fragments lays.
 Meantime the king, his son, and Helen, went
 Where the rich wardrobe breath'd a costly scent. 115
 The king selected from the glitt'ring rows
 A bowl ; the prince a silver beaker chose.
 The beauteous queen revolv'd with careful eyes
 Her various textures of unnumber'd dyes,
 And chose the largest ; with no vulgar art 120
 Her own fair hands embroider'd ev'ry part :
 Beneath the rest it lay divinely bright,
 Like radiant Hesper o'er the gems of night.
 Then with each gift they hasten'd to their guest,
 And thus the king Ulysses' heir address'd. 125
 Since fix'd are thy resolves, may thund'ring Jove
 With happiest omens thy desires approve !
 This silver bowl, whose costly margins shine
 Enchas'd with gold, this valu'd gift be thine ;
 To me this present, of Vulcanian frame, 130
 From Sidon's hospitable monarch came ;
 To thee we now consign the precious load,
 The pride of kings, and labour of a God.

Then

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Then gave the cup ; while Megapenthe brought
The silver vase with living sculpture wrought. 135
The beauteous queen, advancing next, display'd
The shining veil, and thus endearing said.

Accept, dear youth, this monument of love,
Long since, in better days, by Helen wove :
Safe in thy mother's care the vesture lay, 140
To deck thy bride, and grace thy nuptial day.
Meantime mayst thou with happiest speed regain
Thy stately place, and thy wide domain.

She said, and gave the veil : with grateful look
The prince the variegated present took. 145
And now, when through the royal dome they pass'd,
High on a throne the king each stranger plac'd.
A golden ew'r th' attendant damsel brings,
Replete with water from the crystal springs ;
With copious streams the shining vase supplies 150
A silver laver of capacious size.

They wash. The tables in fair order spread,
The glitt'ring canisters are crown'd with bread ;
Viands of various kinds allure the taste,
Of choicest sort and savour ; rich repast ! 155
Whilst Eteoneus portions out the shares,
Atrides' son the purple draught prepares.

And now (each sated with the genial feast,
And the short rage of thirst and hunger ceast)
Ulysses' son, with his illustrious friend, 160
The horses join, the polish'd car ascend.
Along the court the fiery steeds rebound,
And the wide portal echoes to the sound.

The king precedes : a bowl with fragrant wine
(Libation destin'd to the pow'rs divine) 165
His right hand held : before the steeds he stands,
Then, mix'd with pray'rs, he utters these commands.

Farewell and prosper, youths ! Let Nestor know
What grateful thoughts still in this bosom glow,
For all the proofs of his paternal care, 170
Through the long dangers of the ten years war.
Ah ! doubt not our report (the prince rejoin'd)
Of all the virtues of thy gen'rous mind.

And oh ! return'd might we Ulysses meet !
 To him thy presents shew, thy words repeat : 175
 How will each speech his grateful wonder raise ?
 How will each gift indulge us in thy praise ?

Scarce ended thus the prince, when on the right
 Advanc'd the bird of Jove ; auspicious sight !
 A milk-white fowl his clinching talons bore, 180
 With care domestic pamper'd at the floor.
 Peasants in vain with threat'ning cries pursue ;
 In solemn speed the bird majestic flew
 Full dexter to the car : the prosp'rous sight
 Fill'd ev'ry breast with wonder and delight. 185

But Nestor's son the cheerful silence broke,
 And in these words the Spartan chief bespoke.
 Say if to us the Gods these omens send,
 Or fates peculiar to thyself portend ? 189

Whilst yet the monarch paus'd, with doubts oppress'd,
 The beauteous queen reliev'd his lab'ring breast.

Hear me, she cry'd, to whom the Gods have giv'n
 To read this sign, and mystic sense of heav'n.
 As thus the plummy sov'reign of the air
 Left on the mountain's brow his callow care, 195
 And wander'd through the wide æthereal way
 To pour his wrath on yon luxurious prey ;
 So shall thy godlike father, toss'd in vain
 Through all the dangers of the boundless main,
 Arrive, (or is perchance already come), 200
 From slaughter'd gluttons to release the dome.

Oh ! if this promis'd bliss by thund'ring Jove
 (The prince reply'd) stand fix'd in fate above ;
 To thee, as to some God, I'll temples raise,
 And crown thy altars with the costly blaze. 205

He said ; and bending o'er his chariot, flung
 Athwart the fiery steeds the smarting thong :
 The bounding shafts upon the harness play,
 Till night descending intercepts the way.
 To Diocles, at Pheræ they repair, 210
 Whose boasted fire was sacred Alpheus' heir ;
 With him all night the youthful strangers stay'd,
 Nor found the hospitable rites unpay'd.

But

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But soon as morning from her orient bed
Had ting'd the mountains with her earliest red, 215
They join'd the steeds, and on the chariot sprung;
The brazen portals in their passage rung.

To Pylos soon they came; when thus begun
To Nestor's heir Ulysses' godlike son:
Let not Pisistratus in vain be prest, 220
Nor unconsenting hear his friend's request;
His friend by long hereditary claim,
In toils his equal, and in years the same.
No farther from our vessel, I implore,
The coursers drive; but lash them to the shore. 225
Too long thy father would his friend detain;
I dread his proffer'd kindness, urg'd in vain.

The hero paus'd, and ponder'd this request,
While love and duty warr'd within his breast:
At length resolved, he turn'd his ready hand, 230
And lash'd his panting coursers to the strand.
There, while within the poop with care he stor'd
The regal presents of the Spartan lord;
With speed begone, (said he), call ev'ry mate,
Ere yet to Nestor I the tale relate: 235

'Tis true, the fervour of his gen'rous heart
Brooks no repulse, nor couldst thou soon depart:
Himself will seek thee here, nor wilt thou find,
In words alone, the Pylian monarch kind.
But when arriv'd he thy return shall know, 240
How will his breast with honest fury glow?
This said, the sounding strokes his horses fire,
And soon he reach'd the palace of his fire.

Now, (cry'd Telemachus), with speedy care
Hoise ev'ry sail, and ev'ry oar prepare. 245
Swift as the word his willing mates obey,
And seize their seats, impatient for the sea.

Meantime the prince with sacrifice adores
Minerva, and her guardian aid implores;
When lo! a wretch ran breathless to the shore, 250
New from his crime, and reeking yet with gore.
A seer he was, from great Melampus sprung,
Melampus, who in Pylos flourish'd long,

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Till, urg'd by wrongs, a foreign realm he chose,
 Far from the hateful cause of all his woes. 255
 Neleus his treasures one long year detains ;
 As long he groan'd in Phylacus's chains :
 Meantime, what anguish and what rage combin'd,
 For lovely Pero rack'd his lab'ring mind !
 Yet 'scap'd he death ; and, vengeful of his wrong,
 To Pylos drove the lowing herds along : 261
 Then (Neleus vanquish'd, and consign'd the fair
 To Bias' arms) he fought a foreign air :
 Argos the rich for his retreat he chose,
 There form'd his empire, there his palace rose. 265
 From him Antiphates and Mantius came :
 The first begot Oiclus great in fame,
 And he Amphiaraus, immortal name !
 The people's saviour, and divinely wise,
 Belov'd by Jove, and him who gilds the skies, 270
 Yet short his date of life ! by female pride he dies.
 From Mantius Clitus, whom Aurora's love
 Snatch'd for his beauty to the thrones above ;
 And Polyphides, on whom Phœbus shone
 With fullest rays, Amphiaraus now gone ; 275
 In Hyperesia's groves he made abode,
 And taught mankind the counsels of the God.
 From him sprung Theoclymenus, who found
 (The sacred wine yet foaming on the ground)
 Telemachus : whom, as to heav'n he press'd 280
 His ardent vows, the stranger thus address'd.
 O thou that dost thy happy course prepare
 With pure libations, and with solemn pray'r !
 By that dread pow'r to whom thy vows are paid,
 By all the lives of these, thy own dear head, 285
 Declare sincerely to no foe's demand
 Thy name, thy lineage, and paternal land.
 Prepare then, said Telemachus, to know
 A tale from falsehood free, not free from wo.
 From Ithaca, of royal birth, I came, 290
 And great Ulysses (ever honour'd name !)
 Was once my sire : though now for ever lost
 In Stygian gloom he glides a pensive ghost !

Whose

Whose fate inquiring, through the world we rove ;
The last, the wretched proof of filial love. 295

The stranger then : Nor shall I aught conceal,
But the dire secret of my fate reveal.
Of my own tribe an Argive wretch I flew ;
Whole pow'rful friends the luckless deed pursue
With unrelenting rage, and force from home 300
The blood-stain'd exile, ever doom'd to roam.

But bear, Oh bear me o'er yon azure flood ;
Receive the suppliant ! spare my destin'd blood !
Stranger, (reply'd the prince), securely rest
Affianc'd in our faith ; henceforth our guest. 305

Thus affable, Ulysses' godlike heir
Takes from the stranger's hand the glitt'ring spear :
He climbs the ship, ascends the stern with haste,
And by his side the guest accepted plac'd.
The chief his orders gives : th' obedient band 310
With due observance wait the chief's command :
With speed the mast they rear, with speed unbind
The spacious sheet, and stretch it to the wind.

Minerva calls ; the ready gales obey
With rapid speed to whirl them o'er the sea. 315
Cræus they pass'd, next Chalcis roll'd away,
When thick'ning darkness clos'd the doubtful day ;
The silver Phæa's glitt'ring rills they lost,
And skimm'd along by Elis' sacred coast.

Then cautious through the rocky reaches wind, 320
And turning sudden, shun the death design'd.

Meantime the king, Eumæus, and the rest,
Sat in the cottage, at their rural feast :
The banquet pass'd, and satiate ev'ry man,
To try his host Ulysses thus began. 325

Yet one night more, my friends, indulge your guest ;
The last I purpose in your walls to rest :
To-morrow for myself I must provide,
And only ask your counsel, and a guide :
Patient to roam the street, by hunger led, 330
And bless the friendly hand that gives me bread.
There in Ulysses' roof I may relate
Ulysses' wand'rings to his royal mate ;

Or mingling with the suitors haughty train,
Not undeserving, some support obtain. 335

Hermes to me his various gifts imparts,
Patron of industry and manual arts :
Few can with me in dext'rous works contend,
The pyre to build, the stubborn oak to rend ; 340

To turn the tasteful viand o'er the flame ;
Or foam the goblet with a purple stream.
Such are the tasks of men of mean estate,
Whom fortune dooms to serve the rich and great.

Alas ! (Eumæus with a sigh rejoin'd),
How sprung a thought so monstrous in thy mind ? 345

If on that godless race thou wouldst attend,
Fate owes thee sure a miserable end !

Their wrongs and blasphemies ascend the sky,
And pull descending vengeance from on high.
Not such, my friend, the servants of their feast : 350

A blooming train in rich embroid'ry drest,
With earth's whole tribute the bright table bends,
And smiling round celestial youth attends.

Stay then : no eye askance beholds thee here ;
Sweet is thy converse to each social ear ; 355

Well pleas'd, and pleasing, in our cottage rest,
Till good Telemachus accepts his guest

With genial gifts, and change of fair attires,
And safe conveys thee where thy soul desires.

To him the man of woes : O gracious Jove ! 360

Reward this stranger's hospitable love,
Who knows the son of sorrow to relieve,

Cheers the sad heart, nor lets affliction grieve.
Of all the ill's unhappy mortals know, 365

A life of wand'rings is the greatest wo :
On all their weary ways wait care and pain,

And pine and penury, a meagre train.
To such a man since harbour you afford,

Relate the farther fortunes of your lord ;
What cares his mother's tender breast engage, 370

And sire, forsaken on the verge of age ;
Beneath the sun prolong they yet their breath,

Or range the house of darkness and of death ?
To

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To whom the swain: Attend what you inquire.
 Laertes lives, the miserable sire, 375
 Lives, but implores of ev'ry pow'r to lay
 The burden down, and wishes for the day.
 Torn from his offspring in the eve of life,
 Torn from th' embraces of his tender wife,
 Sole, and all comfortless, he wastes away. 380
 Old age, untimely posting ere his day.
 She too, sad mother! for Ulysses lost,
 Pin'd out her bloom, and vanish'd to a ghost.
 (So dire a fate, ye righteous Gods! avert,
 From ev'ry friendly, ev'ry feeling heart!) 385
 While yet she was, tho' clouded o'er with grief,
 Her pleasing converse minister'd relief:
 With Climene, her youngest daughter, bred,
 One roof contain'd us, and one table fed.
 But when the softly-stealing pace of time 390
 Crept on from childhood into youthful prime,
 To Samos' isle she sent the wedded fair;
 Me to the fields, to tend the rural care;
 Array'd in garments her own hands had wove,
 Nor less the darling object of her love. 395
 Her hapless death my brighter days o'ercaſt,
 Yet providence deserts me not at last;
 My present labours food and drink procure,
 And more, the pleasure to relieve the poor.
 Small is the comfort from the queen to hear 400
 Unwelcome news, or vex the royal ear;
 Blank and discountenanc'd the servants stand,
 Nor dare to question where the proud command:
 No profit springs beneath usurping pow'rs;
 Want feeds not there, where luxury devours, 405
 Nor harbours charity where riot reigns:
 Proud are the lords, and wretched are the swains.
 The suff'ring chief at this began to melt;
 And, oh Eumæus! thou (he cries) hast felt
 The spite of fortune too! her cruel hand 410
 Snatch'd thee an infant from thy native land!
 Snatch'd from thy parents arms, thy parents eyes,
 To early wants! a man of miseries!

Thy

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Thy whole sad story, from its first, declare :
 Sunk the fair city by the rage of war, 415
 Where once thy parents dwelt? or did they keep,
 In humbler life, the lowing herds and sheep?
 So left perhaps to tend the fleecy train,
 Rude pirates seiz'd, and shipp'd thee o'er the main?
 Doom'd a fair prize to grace some prince's board, 420
 The worthy purchase of a foreign lord.

If then my fortunes can delight my friend,
 A story fruitful of events, attend:
 Another's sorrow may thy ear enjoy,
 And wine the lengthen'd intervals employ. 425
 Long nights the now-declining year bestows ;
 A part we consecrate to soft repose,
 A part in pleasing talk we entertain ;
 For too much rest itself becomes a pain.
 Let those whom sleep invites, the call obey, 430
 Their cares resuming with the dawning day :
 Here let us feast, and to the feast be join'd
 Discourse, the sweeter banquet of the mind ;
 Review the series of our lives, and taste
 The melancholy joy of evils past : 435
 For he who much has suffer'd, much will know ;
 And pleas'd remembrance builds delight on wo.

Above Ortygia lies an isle of fame,
 Far hence remote, and Syria is the name ;
 (There curious eyes inscrib'd with wonder trace 440
 The sun's diurnal, and his annual race) ;
 Not large, but fruitful ; stor'd with grass to keep
 The bellowing oxen, and the bleating sheep ;
 Her sloping hills the mantling vines adorn,
 And her rich valleys wave with golden corn. 445
 No want, no famine the glad natives know,
 Nor sink by sickness to the shades below ;
 But when a length of years unnerves the strong,
 Apollo comes, and Cynthia comes along.
 They bend the silver bow with tender skill, 450
 And void of pain, the silent arrows kill.
 Two equal tribes this fertile land divide,
 Where two fair cities rise with equal pride.

But

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But both in constant peace one prince obey,
 And Ctesius there, my father, holds the sway. 455
 Freight'd, it seems, with toys of ev'ry sort
 A ship of Sidon anchor'd in our port ;
 What time it chanc'd the palace entertain'd,
 Skill'd in rich works, a woman of their land.
 This nymph, where anchor'd the Phœnician train, 460
 To wash her robes descending to the main,
 A smooth-tongu'd sailor won her to his mind ;
 (For love deceives the best of woman-kind).
 A sudden trust from sudden liking grew ;
 She told her name, her race, and all she knew. 465
 I too (she cry'd) from glorious Sidon came,
 My father Arybas, of wealthy fame ;
 But snatch'd by pirates from my native place,
 The Taphians sold me to this man's embrace.
 Haste then (the false-designing youth reply'd), 470
 Haste to thy country ; love shall be thy guide :
 Haste to thy father's house, thy father's breast,
 For still he lives, and lives with riches blest.
 " Swear first (she cry'd), ye sailors ! to restore
 " A wretch in safety to her native shore." 475
 Swift as she ask'd, the ready sailors swore.
 She then proceeds : Now let our compact made
 Be nor by signal nor by word betray'd,
 Nor near me any of your crew descry'd
 By road frequented, or by fountain-side. 480
 Be silence still our guard. The monarch's spies
 (For watchful age is ready to surmise)
 Are still at hand ; and this, reveal'd, must be
 Death to yourselves, eternal chains to me.
 Your vessel loaded, and your traffic past, 485
 Dispatch a wary messenger with haste :
 Then gold and costly treasures will I bring,
 And more, the infant offspring of the king.
 Him, child-like wand'ring forth, I'll lead away,
 (A noble prize !), and to your ship convey. 490
 Thus spoke the dame, and homeward took the road.
 A year they traffic, and their vessel load.

Their

Their stores complete, and ready now to weigh,
 A spy was sent their summons to convey :
 An artist to my father's palace came, 495
 With gold and amber chains, elab'rate frame :
 Each female eye the glitt'ring links employ,
 They turn, review, and cheapen ev'ry toy.
 He took th' occasion as they stood intent,
 Gave her the sign, and to his vessel went. 500
 She straight pursu'd, and seiz'd my willing arm ;
 I follow'd smiling, innocent of harm.
 Three golden goblets in the porch she found,
 (The guests not enter'd, but the table crown'd) ;
 Hid in her fraudulent bosom, these she bore. 505
 Now set the sun, and darken'd all the shore.
 Arriving then, where tilting on the tides
 Prepar'd to launch the freighted vessel rides ;
 Aboard they heave us, mount their decks, and sweep
 With level oar along the glassy deep. 510
 Six calmy days and six smooth nights we sail,
 And constant Jove supply'd the gentle gale.
 The sev'nth, the fraudulent wretch, (no cause descri'd),
 Touch'd by Diana's vengeful arrow, dy'd.
 Down dropt the carter's corse, a worthless load, 515 }
 Down to the deep ; there roll'd, the future food
 Of fierce sea-wolves, and monsters of the flood. }
 An helpless infant, I remain'd behind ;
 Thence born to Ithaca by wave and wind ;
 Sold to Laertes, by divine command, 520
 And now adopted to a foreign land.

To him the king : Reciting thus thy cares,
 My secret soul in all thy sorrows shares :
 But one choice blessing (such is Jove's high will)
 Has sweeten'd all thy bitter draught of ill : 525
 Torn from thy country to no hapless end,
 The Gods have, in a master, giv'n a friend.
 Whatever frugal nature needs is thine,
 (For she needs little), daily bread and wine.
 While I, so many wand'rings past and woes, 530
 Live but on what thy poverty bestows.

So pass'd in pleasing dialogue away
 The night; then down to short repose they lay;
 Till radiant rose the messenger of day.
 While in the port of Ithaca, the band
 Of young Telemachus approach'd the land;
 Their sails they loos'd, they lash'd the mast aside,
 And cast their anchors, and the cables ty'd:
 Then on the breezy shore descending, join
 In grateful banquet o'er the rosy wine. 540

When thus the prince: Now each his course pursue;
 I to the fields, and to the city you.
 Long absent hence, I dedicate this day
 My swains to visit, and the works survey.
 Expect me with the morn, to pay the skies
 Our debt of safe return, in feast and sacrifice. 545

Then Theoclymenus: But who shall lend,
 Meantime, protection to thy stranger-friend?
 Straight to the queen and palace shall I fly,
 Or yet more distant, to some lord apply? 550

The prince return'd: Renown'd in days of yore
 Has stood our father's hospitable door;
 No other roof a stranger should receive,
 Nor other hands than ours the welcome give.
 But in my absence riot fills the place,
 Nor bears the modest queen a stranger's face,
 From noiseful revel far remote she flies,
 But rarely seen, or seen with weeping eyes.
 No—let Eurymachus receive my guest,
 Of nature courteous, and by far the best;
 He wooes the queen with more respectful flame,
 And emulates her former husband's fame:
 With what success, 'tis Jove's alone to know,
 And the hop'd nuptials turn to joy or wo. 555

Thus speaking, on the right up-soar'd in air
 The hawk, Apollo's swift-wing'd messenger;
 His deathful pounces tore a trembling dove;
 The clotted feathers, scatter'd from above,
 Between the hero and the vessel pour
 Thick plumage, mingled with a sanguine show'r. 560
 Th' ob-

Th' observing augur took the prince aside,
 Seiz'd by the hand, and thus prophetic cry'd.
 Yon bird that dexter cuts th' æreal road,
 Rose ominous, nor flies without a God:
 No race but thine shall Ithaca obey, 575
 To thine, for ages, heav'n decrees the sway.
 Succeed the omen, Gods! (the youth rejoin'd);
 Soon shall my bounties speak a grateful mind,
 And soon each envy'd happiness attend
 The man, who calls Telemachus his friend. 580
 Then to Peiræus——Thou whom time has prov'd
 A faithful servant, by thy prince belov'd!
 Till we returning shall our guest demand,
 Accept this charge, with honour, at our hand.
 To this Peiræus: Joyful I obey, 585
 Well pleas'd the hospitable rites to pay.
 The presence of thy guest shall best reward
 (If long thy stay) the absence of my lord.
 With that, their anchors he commands to weigh,
 Mount the tall bark, and launch into the sea. 590
 All with obedient haste forsake the shores,
 And plac'd in order, spread their equal oars.
 Then from the deck the prince his sandals takes;
 Pois'd in his hand the pointed jav'lin shakes.
 They part; while less'ning from the hero's view, 595
 Swift to the town the well-row'd galley flew:
 The hero trod the margin of the main,
 And reach'd the mansion of his faithful swain.

T H E
O D Y S S E Y.

B O O K XVI.

T H E A R G U M E N T.

The discovery of Ulysses to Telemachus.

Telemachus arriving at the lodge of Eumæus, sends him to carry Penelope the news of his return. Minerva appearing to Ulysses, commands him to discover himself to his son. The princes, who had lain in ambush to intercept Telemachus in his way, their project being defeated, return to Ithaca.

S OON as the morning blush'd along the plains,
Ulysses, and the monarch of the swains,
Awake the sleeping fires, their meal prepare,
And forth to pasture send the bristly care.
The prince's near approach the dogs descry, 5
And fawning round his feet, confess their joy.
Their gentle blandishment the king survey'd,
Heard his resounding step, and instant said :
Some well-known friend (Eumæus) bends this way ;
His steps I hear ; the dogs familiar play. 10
While yet he spoke, the prince advancing drew
Nigh to the lodge, and now appear'd in view.
Transported, from his seat Eumæus sprung,
Dropp'd the full bowl, and round his bosom hung ;
Kissing his cheek, his hand, while from his eye 15
The tears rain'd copious in a show'r of joy.
As some fond sire who ten long winters grieves,
From foreign climes an only son receives,
† Y (Child

(Child of his age), with strong paternal joy
 Forward he springs, and clasps the fav'rite boy : 20
 So round the youth his arms Eumæus spread,
 As if the grave had giv'n him from the dead.

And is it thou? my ever-dear delight!
 O art thou come to bless my longing sight!
 Never, I never hop'd to view this day, 25
 When o'er the waves you plough'd the desp'rate way.
 Enter, my child! beyond my hopes restor'd,
 O give these eyes to feast upon their lord.
 Enter, oh seldom seen! for lawless pow'rs
 Too much detain thee from these sylvan bow'rs. 30

The prince reply'd: Eumæus, I obey;
 To seek thee, friend, I hither took my way.
 But say, if in the court the queen reside
 Severely chaste, or if commenc'd a bride?

Thus he: and thus the monarch of the swains; 35
 Severely chaste Penelope remains,
 But lost to ev'ry joy, she wastes the day
 In tedious cares, and weeps the night away.

He ended, and (receiving as they pass
 The jav'lin, pointed with a star of brass) 40
 They reach'd the dome; the dome with marble shin'd.
 His seat Ulysses to the prince resign'd.

Not so——(exclaims the prince with decent grace)
 For me, this house shall find an humbler place:
 T' usurp the honours due to silver hairs 45
 And rev'rend strangers, modest youth forbears.

Instant the swain the spoils of beasts supplies,
 And bids the rural throne with osiers rise.
 There sat the prince: the feast Eumæus spread;
 And heap'd the shining canisters with bread. 50
 Thick o'er the board the plenteous viands lay,
 The frugal remnants of the former day.

Then in a bowl he tempers gen'rous wines,
 Around whose verge a mimic ivy twines.
 And, now the rage of thirst and hunger fled, 55
 Thus young Ulysses to Eumæus said.

Whence, father, from what shore this stranger, say?
 What vessel bore him o'er the wat'ry way?

Book XVI. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 255

To human step our land impervious lies,
And round the coast circumfluent oceans rise. 60

The swain returns : A tale of sorrows hear ;
In spacious Crete he drew his natal air,
Long doom'd to wander o'er the land and main,
For heav'n has wove his thread of life with pain.
Half breathless 'scaping to the land, he flew 65
From Thesprot mariners, a murd'rous crew.

To thee, my son, the suppliant I resign ;
I gave him my protection, grant him thine.
Hard task, he cries, thy virtue gives thy friend,
Willing to aid, unable to defend. 70

Can strangers safely in the court reside,
'Midst the swell'd insolence of lust and pride ?
Ev'n I unsafe : the queen in doubt to wed,
Or pay due honours to the nuptial bed ?
Perhaps she weds regardless of her fame, 75
Deaf to the mighty Ulyssæan name.

However, stranger ! from our grace receive
Such honours as besit a prince to give ;
Sandals, a sword, and robes, respect to prove,
And safe to sail with ornaments of love. 80

Till then, thy guest amid the rural train
Far from the court, from danger far, detain.
'Tis mine with food the hungry to supply,
And clothe the naked from th' inclement sky.
Here dwell in safety from the suitors wrongs, 85
And the rude insults of ungovern'd tongues.
For shouldst thou suffer, pow'rless to relieve
I must behold it, and can only grieve.

The brave encompass'd by an hostile train,
O'erpow'r'd by numbers, is but brave in vain. 90

To whom, while anger in his bosom glows,
With warmth replies the man of mighty woes.
Since audience mild is deign'd, permit my tongue
At once to pity and resent thy wrong.
My heart weeps blood, to see a soul so brave 95
Live to base insolence of pow'r a slave.

But tell me, dost thou, prince, dost thou behold
And hear their midnight-revels uncontroll'd ?

256 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book XVI.

Say, do thy subjects in bold faction rise,
 Or priests in fabled oracles advise ? 100
 Or are thy brothers, who should aid thy pow'r,
 Turn'd mean deserters in the needful hour ?
 O that I were from great Ulysses sprung,
 Or that these wither'd nerves like thine were strung ;
 Or, heav'n's ! might he return ! (and soon appear 105
 He shall, I trust ; a hero scorns despair) ;
 Might he return, I yield my life a prey
 To my worst foe, if that avenging day
 Be not their last : but should I lose my life
 Oppress'd by numbers in the glorious strife, 110
 I chuse the nobler part, and yield my breath,
 Rather than bear dishonour, worse than death ;
 Than see the hand of violence invade
 The rev'rend stranger, and the spotless maid ;
 Than see the wealth of kings consum'd in waste, 115
 The drunkards revel, and the gluttons feast.

Thus he, with anger flashing from his eye ;
 Sincere the youthful hero made reply.
 Nor leagu'd in factious arms my subjects rise,
 Nor priests in fabled oracles advise ; 120
 Nor are my brothers, who should aid my pow'r,
 Turn'd mean deserters in the needful hour.
 Ah me ! I boast no brother ; heav'n's dread king
 Gives from our stock an only branch to spring :
 Alone Laertes reign'd Arcegius' heir, 125
 Alone Ulysses drew the vital air,
 And I alone the bed connubial grac'd,
 An unblest'd offspring of a sire unblest'd !
 Each neighb'ring realm, conducive to our wo,
 Sends forth her peers, and ev'ry peer a foe : 130
 The court proud Samos and Dulichium fills,
 And lofty Zacynth crown'd with shady hills.
 Ev'n Ithaca and all her lords invade
 Th' imperial sceptre, and the regal bed :
 The queen averse to love, yet aw'd by pow'r, 135
 Seems half to yield, yet flies the bridal hour :

Meantime

Book XVI. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 257

Meantime their licence uncontroll'd I bear ;
 Ev'n now they envy me the vital air :
 But heav'n will sure revenge, and Gods there are.

But go, Eumæus ! to the queen impart
 Our safe return, and ease a mother's heart.
 Yet secret go ; for num'rous are my foes,
 And here at least I may in peace repose.

To whom the swain : I hear, and I obey :
 But old Laertes weeps his life away,
 And deems thee lost : shall I my speed employ
 To bless his age, a messenger of joy ?
 The mournful hour that tore his son away,
 Sent the sad fire in solitude to stray ;

Yet busied with his slaves, to ease his wo,
 He dress'd the vine, and bade the garden blow,
 Nor food nor wine refus'd : but since the day
 That you to Pylos plough'd the wat'ry way,
 Nor wine nor food he tastes ; but sunk in woes,
 Wild springs the vine, no more the garden blows :
 Shut from the walks of men, to pleasure lost,
 Pensive and pale, he wanders, half a ghost.

Wretched old man ! (with tears the prince returns),
 Yet cease to go — what man so bless'd but mourns ?
 Were ev'ry wish indulg'd by fav'ring skies,
 This hour should give Ulysses to my eyes.
 But to the queen with speed dispatchful bear
 Our safe return, and back with speed repair :
 And let some handmaid of her train resort
 To good Laertes in his rural court.

While yet he spoke, impatient of delay
 He brac'd his sandals on, and strode away.
 Then from the heav'ns the martial goddess flies
 Through the wide fields of air, and cleaves the skies ;
 In form, a virgin in soft beauty's bloom,
 Skill'd in th' illustrious labours of the loom.
 Alone to Ithacus she stood display'd,
 But unapparent as a viewless shade.
 Escap'd Telemachus : (the pow'rs above,
 Seen or unseen, o'er earth at pleasure move).

258 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book XVI.

The dogs intelligent confess the tread
Of pow'r divine, and howling, trembling fled.
The Goddess, beck'ning, waves her deathless hands ;
Dauntless the king before the goddess stands.

Then why, (she said), O favour'd of the skies ! 180
Why to thy godlike son this long disguise ?
Stand forth reveal'd: with him thy cares employ
Against thy foes ; be valiant, and destroy !
Lo I descend in that avenging hour,
To combat by thy side, thy guardian pow'r. 185

She said, and o'er him waves her wand of gold :
Imperial robes his manly limbs infold ;
At once with grace divine his frame improves ;
At once with majesty enlarg'd he moves :
Youth flush'd his redd'ning cheek, and from his brows
A length of hair in sable ringlets flows ; 191
His black'ning chin receives a deeper shade :
Then from his eyes upsprung the warrior-maid.

The hero reascends : the prince o'eraw'd
Scarce lifts his eyes, and bows as to a God. 195
Then with surprise (surprise chaf'tis'd by fears),
How art thou chang'd ! (he cry'd), a God appears !
Far other vests thy limbs majestic grace !
Far other glories lighten from thy face !
If heav'n be thy abode, with pious care - 200
Lo ! I the ready sacrifice prepare ;
Lo ! gifts of labour'd gold adorn thy shrine,
To win thy grace : O save us, pow'r divine !

Few are my days, Ulysses made reply,
Nor I, alas ! descendent of the sky. 205
I am thy father. O my son ! my son !
That father, for whose sake thy days have run
One scene of wo ; to endless cares consign'd,
And outrag'd by the wrongs of base mankind.

Then rushing to his arms, he kiss'd his boy 210
With the strong raptures of a parent's joy.
Tears bathe his cheek, and tears the ground bedew :
He strain'd him close, as to his breast he grew.
Ah me ! (exclaims the prince with fond desire),
Thou art not — no, thou canst not be my sire, 215

Heav'n

Book XVI. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 259

Heav'n such illusion only can impose,
By the false joy to aggravate my woes,
Who but a God can change the gen'ral doom,
And give to wither'd age a youthful bloom?
Late, worn with years, in weeds obscene you trod; 220
Now, cloth'd in majesty, you move a God!

Forbear, he cry'd; for heav'n reserve that name,
Give to thy father but a father's claim;
Other Ulysses shalt thou never see;
I am Ulysses, I (my son) am he. 225

Twice ten sad years o'er earth and ocean tost,
'Tis giv'n at length to view my native coast.
Pallas, unconquer'd maid, my frame surrounds
With grace divine; her pow'r admits no bounds:
She o'er my limbs old age and wrinkles shed; 230
Now strong as youth, magnificent I tread.
The Gods with ease frail man depress or raise,
Exalt the lowly, or the proud debase.

He spoke and sat. The prince with transport flew,
Hung round his neck, while tears his cheek bedew;
Nor lets the father pour'd a social flood! 236

They wept abundant, and they wept aloud.
As the bold eagle with fierce sorrow stung,
Or parent-vulture, mourns her ravish'd young;
They cry, they scream, their unfledg'd brood a prey 240
To some rude churl, and borne by stealth away;
So they aloud: and tears in tides had run,
Their grief unfinish'd with the setting sun:
But checking the full torrent in its flow,
The prince thus interrupts the solemn wo. 245

What ship transported thee, O father, say?
And what bless'd hands have oar'd thee on the way?

All, all, (Ulysses instant made reply),
I tell thee all, my child, my only joy!
Phæacians bore me to the port assign'd, 250

A nation ever to the stranger kind;
Wrapt in th' embrace of sleep, the faithful train
O'er seas convey'd me to my native reign:
Embroider'd vestures, gold, and brags are laid
Conceal'd in caverns in the sylvan shade. 255

Hither,

260 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book XVIII

Hither, intent the rival rout to slay,
And plan the scene of death, I bend my way :
So Pallas wills — But thou, my son, explain
The names and numbers of th' audacious train ;
'Tis mine to judge if better to employ 260
Assistent force, or singly to destroy.

O'er earth (returns the prince) resounds thy name,
Thy well-try'd wisdom, and thy martial fame :
Yet at thy words I start, in wonder lost ;
Can we engage, not decads, but an host ? 265
Can we alone in furious battle stand
Against that num'rous and determin'd band ?
Hear then their numbers : From Dulichium came
Twice twenty-six, all peers of mighty name ;
Six are their menial train : twice twelve the boast 270
Of Samos : twenty from Zacynthus coast ;
And twelve our country's pride ; to these belong
Medon and Phemius skill'd in heav'nly song.
Two few'rs from day to day the revels wait,
Exact of taste, and serve the feast in state. 275
With such a foe th' unequal fight to try,
Were by false courage unreveng'd to die.
Then what assistent pow'rs you boast, relate,
Ere yet we mingle in the stern debate.

Mark well my voice, (Ulysses straight replies) : 280
What need of aids, if favour'd by the skies ;
If shielded to the dreadful fight we move,
By mighty Pallas, and by thund'ring Jove ?

Sufficient they (Telemachus rejoin'd)
Against the banded pow'rs of all mankind : 285
They, high enthron'd above the rolling clouds,
Wither the strength of man, and awe the Gods.

Such aids expect, he cries, when strong in might
We rise terrific to the task of fight.
But thou, when morn salutes th' aëreal plain, 290
The court revisit and the lawless train :
Me thither in disguise Eumæus leads,
An aged mendicant in tatter'd weeds.
There, if base scorn insult my rev'rend age,
Bear it, my son ! repress thy rising rage. 295

Book XVI. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 261

If outrag'd, cease that outrage to repel;
 Bear it, my son! howe'er thy heart rebel.
 Yet strive by pray'r and counsel to restrain
 Their lawless insults, though thou strive in vain:
 For wicked ears are deaf to wisdom's call, 300
 And vengeance strikes whom heav'n has doom'd to fall.
 Once more attend: When * the whose pow'r inspires
 The thinking mind, my soul to vengeance fires,
 I give the sign; that instant, from beneath,
 Aloft convey the instruments of death, 305
 Armour and arms; and, if mistrust arise,
 Thus veil the truth in plausible disguise.

" These glitt'ring weapons, ere he sail'd to Troy,
 " Ulysses view'd with stern heroic joy;
 " 'Then beaming o'er th' illumin'd wall they shone: 310
 " Now dust dishonours, all their lustre gone.
 " I bear them hence (so Jove my soul inspires)
 " From the pollution of the fuming fires;
 " Lest when the bowl inflames, in vengeful mood
 " Ye rush to arms, and stain the feast with blood: 315
 " Oft ready swords in luckless hour incite
 " The hand of wrath, and arm it for the fight."

Such be the plea, and by the plea deceive:
 For Jove infatuates all, and all believe.
 Yet leave for each of us a sword to wield, 320
 A pointed jav'lin, and a fencible shield.
 But by my blood that in thy bosom glows,
 By that regard a son his father owes;
 The secret, that thy father lives, retain
 Lock'd in thy bosom from the household train; 325
 Hide it from all; ev'n from Eumæus hide,
 From my dear father, and my dearer bride.
 One care remains, to note the loyal few
 Whose faith yet lasts among the menial crew;
 And noting, ere we rise in vengeance, prove 330
 Who loves his prince; for sure you merit love.
 To whom the youth: To emulate I aim
 The brave and wise, and my great father's fame.

* Minerva.

But reconsider, since the wisest err,
Vengeance resolv'd, 'tis dang'rous to defer. 335

What length of time must we consume in vain,
Too curious to explore the menial train?
While the proud foes, industrious to destroy
Thy wealth in riot, the delay enjoy.

Suffice it in this exigence alone 340

To mark the damsels that attend the throne:
Dispers'd the youth resides; their faith to prove
Jove grants henceforth, if thou hast spoke from Jove.

While in debate they waste the hours away,
Th' associates of the prince repass'd the bay; 345

With speed they guide the vessel to the shores;

With speed debarking land the naval stores;

Then faithful to their charge, to Clytius bear,

And trust the presents to his friendly care.

Swift to the queen a herald flies t' impart 350

Her son's return, and ease a parent's heart;

Lest a sad prey to ever-musing cares,

Pale grief destroy what time a while forbears.

Th' uncautious herald with impatience burns,

And cries aloud, Thy son, oh queen, returns. 355

Eumæus sage approach'd th' imperial throne,

And breath'd his mandate to her ear alone,

Then measur'd back the way. — The suitor-band

Stung to the soul, abash'd, confounded stand;

And issuing from the dome, before the gate, 360

With clouded looks, a pale assembly sat.

At length Eurymachus: Our hopes are vain;

Telemachus in triumph sails the main.

Haste, rear the mast, the swelling shroud display;

Haste, to our ambush'd friends the news-convey! 365

Scarce had he spoke, when turning to the strand

Amphinomus survey'd th' associate band;

Full to the bay within the winding shores

With gather'd sails they stood, and lifted oars.

O friends! he cry'd, elate with rising joy, 370

See to the port secure the vessel fly!

Some God has told them, or themselves survey

The bark escap'd; and measure back their way.

Swift

Book XVI. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 263

Swift at the word descending to the shores,
They moor the vessel and unlade the stores : 375
Then moving from the strand, apart they sat,
And full and frequent, form'd a dire debate.

Lives then the boy ? he lives, (Antinous cries),
The care of Gods, and fav'rite of the skies.
All night we watch'd, till with her orient wheels 380
Aurora flam'd above the eastern hills,

And from the lofty brow of rocks by day
Took in the ocean with a broad survey :
Yet safe he sails ! the pow'rs cœlestial give
To shun the hidden snares of death, and live. 385

But die he shall, and thus condemn'd to bleed,
Be now the scene of instant death decreed :
Hope ye success ? undaunted crush the foe.
Is he not wise ? know this, and strike the blow.

Wait ye, till he to arms in council draws 390
The Greeks, averse too justly to our cause ?
Strike, ere, the states conven'd, the foe betray
Our murd'rous ambush on the wat'ry way.

Or chuse ye vagrant from their rage to fly
Outcasts of earth, to breathe an unknown sky ? 395
The brave prevent misfortune ; then be brave,
And bury future danger in his grave.

Returns he ? ambush'd we'll his walk invade,
Or where he hides in solitude and shade :
And give the palace to the queen a dow'r, 400
Or him she blesses in the bridal hour.

But if submissive you resign the sway,
Slaves to a boy ; go, flatter and obey.
Retire we instant to our native reign,
Nor be the wealth of kings consum'd in vain. 405

Then wed, whom choice approves : the queen be giv'n
To some blest'd prince, the prince decreed by heav'n.

Abash'd, the suitor-train his voice attends ;
Till from his throne Amphinomus descends,
Who o'er Dulichium stretch'd his spacious reign, 410
A land of plenty, blest'd with ev'ry grain :
Chief of the numbers who the queen address,
And though displeasing, yet displeasing least.

Soft

Soft were his words ; his actions wisdom sway'd ;
Graceful a while he paus'd, then mildly said. 415

O friends, forbear ! and be the thought withstood :
'Tis horrible to shed imperial blood !

Consult we first th' all-seeing pow'rs above,
And the sure oracles of righteous Jove.

If they assent, ev'n by this hand he dies ; 420
If they forbid, I war not with the skies.

He said : the rival train his voice approv'd,
And rising instant to the palace mov'd.

Arriv'd, with wild tumultuous noise they sat,
Recumbent on the shining thrones of state. 425

Then Medon, conscious of their dire debates,
The murd'rous council to the queen relates.

Touch'd at the dreadful story she descends :
Her hasty steps a damsel-train attends.

Full where the dome its shining valves expands, 430
Sudden before the rival pow'rs she stands :

And veiling decent with a modest shade

Her cheek, indignant to Antinous said :

O void of faith ! of all bad men the worst !

Renown'd for wisdom, by th' abuse accurst ! 435

Mistaking fame proclaims thy gen'rous mind !

Thy deeds denote thee of the basest kind.

Wretch ! to destroy a prince that friendship gives,

While in his guest his murd'rer he receives :

Nor dread superior Jove, to whom belong 440

The cause of suppliants, and revenge of wrong.

Hast thou forgot, (ungrateful as thou art),

Who sav'd thy father with a friendly part ?

Lawless he ravag'd with his martial pow'rs

The Taphian pirates on Thesprotia's shores ; 445

Enrag'd, his life, his treasures they demand ;

Ulysses sav'd him from th' avenger's hand.

And wouldst thou evil for his good repay ?

His bed dishonour, and his house betray ?

Afflict his queen ? and with a murd'rous hand 450

Destroy his heir ? — but cease, 'tis I command.

Far hence those fears, (Eurymachus reply'd),

O prudent princess ! bid thy soul confide.

Breathes

Book XVI. HOMER's ODYSSEY. 265

Breathes there a man who dares that hero slay,
While I behold the golden light of day ? 455
No: by the righteous pow'rs of heav'n I swear,
His blood in vengeance smokes upon my spear.
Ulysses, when my infant days I led,
With wine suffic'd me, and with dainties fed:
My gen'rous soul abhors th' ungrateful part, 460
And my friend's son lives dearest to my heart.
Then fear no mortal arm: if heav'n destroy,
We must resign; for man is born to die.

Thus smooth he ended, yet his death conspir'd:
Then sorrowing, with sad step the queen retir'd, 465
With streaming eyes all comfortless deplor'd,
Touch'd with the dear remembrance of her lord;
Nor ceas'd, till Pallas bid her sorrows fly,
And in soft slumber seal'd her flowing eye.

And now Eumæus, at the ev'ning-hour, 470
Came late returning to his sylvan bow'r.
Ulysses and his son had dress'd with art
A yearling boar, and gave the Gods their part,
Holy repast! That instant from the skies
The martial Goddesses to Ulysses flies: 475
She waves her golden wand, and reassumes
From ev'ry feature ev'ry grace that blooms;
At once his vestures change; at once she sheds
Age o'er his limbs, that tremble as he treads;
Left to the queen the swain with transport fly, 480
Unable to contain th' unruly joy.

When near he drew, the prince breaks forth; Proclaim
What tidings, friend! what speaks the voice of fame?
Say, if the suitors measure back the main,
Or still in ambush thirst for blood in vain? 485

Whether (he cries) they measure back the flood,
Or still in ambush thirst in vain for blood,
Escap'd my care: where lawless suitors sway,
Thy mandate borne, my soul disdain'd to stay.
But from th' Hermæan height I cast a view, 490
Where to the port a bark high bounding flew:
Her freight a shining band; with martial air
Each pois'd his shield, and each advanc'd his spear:

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And if aright these searching eyes survey,
Th' eluded suitors stem the wat'ry way.

495

The prince, well pleas'd to disappoint their wives,
Steals on his fire a glance, and secret smiles.
And now a short repast prepar'd, they fed,
Till the keen rage of craving hunger fled :
Then to repose withdrawn, apart they lay,
And in soft sleep forgot the cares of day.

500

THE

T H E O D Y S S E Y.

B O O K XVII.

T H E A R G U M E N T.

Telemachus, returning to the city, relates to Penelope the sum of his travels. Ulysses is conducted by Eumæus to the palace, where his old dog Argus acknowledges his master, after an absence of twenty years, and dies with joy. Eumæus returns into the country, and Ulysses remains among the suitors, whose behaviour is described.

Soon as Aurora, daughter of the dawn,
 Sprinkled with roseate light the dewy lawn ;
 In haste the prince arose, prepar'd to part ;
 His hand impatient grasps the pointed dart ;
 Fair on his feet the polish'd sandals shine, 5
 And thus he greets the master of the swine.
 My friend, adieu : let this short stay suffice ;
 I haste to meet my mother's longing eyes,
 And end her tears, her sorrows, and her sighs. }
 But thou attentive, what we order heed ; 10
 This hapless stranger to the city lead ;
 By public bounty let him there be fed,
 And bless the hand that stretches forth the bread.
 To wipe the tears from all afflicted eyes,
 My will may covet, but my pow'r denies. 15
 If this raise anger in the stranger's thought,
 The pain of anger punishes the fault :
 The very truth I undisguis'd declare ;
 For what so easy as to be sincere ?

To this Ulysses : What the prince requires 20
Of swift removal, seconds my desires.

To want like mine, the peopled town can yield.
More hopes of comfort, than the lonely field.
Nor fits my age to till the labour'd lands,
Or stoop to tasks a rural lord demands. 25

Adieu ! but since this ragged garb can bear
So ill th' inclemencies of morning-air,
A few hours space permit me here to stay ;
My steps Eumæus shall to town convey,
With riper beams when Phœbus warms the day. 30

Thus he : nor aught Telemachus reply'd,
But left the mansion with a lofty stride.
Schemes of revenge his pond'ring breast elate,
Revolving deep the suitors' sudden fate.
Arriving now before th' imperial hall, 35

He props his spear against the pillar'd wall ;
Then like a lion o'er the threshold bounds ;
The marble pavement with his step resounds :
His eye first glanc'd where Euryclea spreads
With furry spoils of beasts the splendid beds : 40
She saw, she wept, she ran with eager pace,
And reach'd her master with a long embrace.
All crouded round, the family appears

With wild entrancement, and ecstatic tears.
Swift from above descends the royal fair ; 45
(Her beauteous cheeks the blush of Venus wear,
Chasten'd with coy Diana's pensive air) ;
Hangs o'er her son ; in his embraces dies ;
Rains kisses on his neck, his face, his eyes.
Few words she spoke, though much she had to say, 50
And scarce these few, for tears, could force their way.

Light of my eyes ! he comes ! unhop'd-for joy !
Has heav'n from Pylos brought my lovely boy ?
So snatch'd from all our cares ! — Tell, hast thou known
Thy father's fate ? and tell me all thy own. 55

Oh dearest, most rever'd of womankind !
Cease with those tears to melt a manly mind,
(Reply'd the prince), nor be our fates deplor'd,
From death and treason to thy arms restor'd.

Book XVII. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 269

Go bathe, and rob'd in white, ascend the tow'rs ; 60
 With all thy handmaids thank th' immortal pow'rs ;
 To ev'ry God vow hecatombs to bleed,
 And call Jove's vengeance on their guilty deed :
 While to th' assembled council I repair ;
 A stranger sent by heav'n attends me there ; 65
 My new accepted guest I haste to find,
 Now to Piræus' honour'd charge consign'd.

The matron heard ; nor was his word in vain :
 She bath'd ; and rob'd in white, with all her train,
 To ev'ry God vow'd hecatombs to bleed, 70
 And call'd Jove's vengeance on the guilty deed.
 Arm'd with his lance the prince then pass'd the gate ;
 Two dogs behind, a faithful guard, await :
 Pallas his form with grace divine improves :
 The gazing croud admires him as he moves. 75
 Him, gath'ring round, the haughty suitors greet
 With semblance fair, but inward deep deceit.
 Their false addresses gen'rous he deny'd,
 Pass'd on, and sat by faithful Mentor's side ;
 With Antiphus, and Halitherses sage, 80
 (His father's counsellors, rever'd for age).
 Of his own fortunes, and Ulysses' fame,
 Much ask'd the seniors ; till Piræus came.
 The stranger-guest pursu'd him close behind ;
 Whom when Telemachus beheld, he join'd. 85
 He (when Piræus ask'd for slaves to bring
 The gifts and treasures of the Spartan king)
 Thus thoughtful answer'd : Those we shall not move,
 Dark and unconscious of the will of Jove :
 We know not yet the full event of all : 90
 Stabb'd in his palace if your prince must fall,
 Us and our house if treason must o'erthrow,
 Better a friend possess them, than a foe :
 If death to these, and vengeance heav'n decree,
 Riches are welcome then, not else, to me. 95
 Till then, retain the gifts. — The hero said,
 And in his hand the willing stranger led.
 Then disarray'd, the shining bath they sought,
 (With unguents smooth), of polish'd marble wrought ;

Obedient handmaids with assisting toil 100
 Supply the limpid wave, and fragrant oil :
 Then o'er their limbs refulgent robes they threw,
 And fresh from bathing to their seats withdrew.
 The golden ew'r a nymph attendant brings,
 Replenish'd from the pure translucent springs ; 105
 With copious streams that golden ew'r supplies
 A silver laver of capacious size.

'They wash: the table, in fair order spread,
 Is pil'd with viands and the strength of bread.
 Full opposite, before the folding gate, 110
 The pensive mother sits in humble state ;
 Lowly she sat, and with dejected view
 The fleecy threads her ivory fingers drew.
 The prince and stranger shar'd the genial feast,
 Till now the rage of thirst and hunger ceast. 115

When thus the queen : My son ! my only friend !
 Say, to my mournful couch shall I ascend ?
 (The couch deserted now a length of years,
 The couch for ever water'd with my tears) ;
 Say, wilt thou not, (ere yet the suitor-crew 120
 Return, and riot shakes our walls anew),
 Say, wilt thou not the least account afford,
 The least glad tidings of my absent lord ?

To her the youth : We reach'd the Pylian plains,
 Where Nestor, shepherd of his people, reigns. 125
 All arts of tenderness to him are known,
 Kind to Ulysses' race as to his own ;
 No father, with a fonder grasp of joy,
 Strains to his bosom his long-absent boy.
 But all unknown, if yet Ulysses breathe, 130
 Or glide a spectre in the realms beneath.
 For further search, his rapid steeds transport
 My lengthen'd journey to the Spartan court.
 There Argive Helen I beheld, whose charms
 (So heav'n decreed) engag'd the great in arms. 135
 My cause of coming told, he thus rejoin'd ;
 And still his words live perfect in my mind.

Heav'ns ! would a soft, inglorious, dastard train
 An absent hero's nuptial joys profane !

Book XVII. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 271

So with her young, amid the woodland shades, 140
 A tim'rous hind the lion's court invades,
 Leaves in that fatal lair her tender fawns,
 And climbs the cliff, or feeds along the lawns ;
 Meantime returning, with remorseless sway
 The monarch savage rends the panting prey : 145
 With equal fury, and with equal fame,
 Shall great Ulysses reassert his claim.

O Jove ! supreme ! whom men and Gods revere !
 And thou whose lustre gilds the rolling sphere !
 With pow'r congenial join'd, propitious aid 150
 The chief adopted by the martial maid !

Such to our wish the warrior soon restore,
 As when, contending on the Lesbian shore,
 His prowess Philomelides confess'd,
 And loud-acclaiming Greeks the victor bless'd : 155

Then soon th' invaders of his bed and throne
 Their love presumptuous shall by death atone.
 Now what you question of my ancient friend,
 With truth I answer ; thou the truth attend.
 Learn what I heard the * sea-born seer relate, 160
 Whose eye can pierce the dark recess of fate.

Sole in an isle, imprison'd by the main,
 The sad survivor of his num'rous train,
 Ulysses lies ; detain'd by magic charms,
 And press'd unwilling in Calypso's arms. 165

No sailors there, no vessels to convey,
 Nor oars to cut th' immeasurable way —
 This told Atrides, and he told no more.
 Thence safe I voyag'd to my native shore.

He ceas'd ; nor made the pensive queen reply, 170
 But droop'd her head, and drew a secret sigh.

When Theoclymenus the seer began :
 Oh suff'ring consort of the suff'ring man !
 What human knowledge could, those kings might tell ;
 But I the secrets of high heav'n reveal. 175

Before the first of Gods be this declar'd,
 Before the board whose blessings we have shar'd ;

* Proteus,

Witness the genial rites, and witness all
 This house holds sacred in her ample wall !
 Ev'n now this instant great Ulysses laid. 180

At rest, or wand'ring in his country's shade,
 Their guilty deeds, in hearing, and in view,
 Secret revolves ; and plans the vengeance due.
 Of this sure auguries the Gods bestow'd,
 When first our vessel anchor'd in your road. 185

Succeed those omens, heav'n ! (the queen rejoin'd),
 So shall our bounties speak a grateful mind ;
 And ev'ry envy'd happiness attend
 The man who calls Penelope his friend.

Thus commun'd they : while in the marble court
 (Scene of their insolence) the lords resort ; 194
 Athwart the spacious square each tries his art
 To whirl the disk, or aim the missile dart.

Now did the hour of sweet repast arrive,
 And from the field the victim flocks they drive : 195
 Medon the herald (one who pleas'd them best,
 And honour'd with a portion of their feast)
 To bid the banquet, interrupts their play,
 Swift to the hall they haste ; aside they lay
 Their garments, and succinct, the victims slay. 200
 Then sheep, and goats, and bristly porkers bled,
 And the proud steer was o'er the marble spread.

While thus the copious banquet they provide ;
 Along the road conversing side by side,
 Proceed Ulysses and the faithful swain : 205
 When thus Eumæus, gen'rous and humane.

To town, observant of our lord's behest,
 Now let us speed ; my friend, no more my guest !
 Yet like myself I wish'd thee here preferr'd,
 Guard of the flock, or keeper of the herd. 210
 But much to raise my master's wrath I fear ;
 The wrath of princes ever is severe.

Then heed his will, and be our journey made
 While the broad beams of Phoebus are display'd,
 Or ere brown ev'ning spreads her chilly shade. 215

Just thy advice, (the prudent chief rejoin'd),
 And such as suits the dictate of my mind.

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Lead on : but help me to some staff to stay
 My feeble step, since rugged is the way,
 Across his shoulders then the scrip he flung, 220
 Wide patch'd, and fasten'd by a twisted thong :
 A staff Eumæus gave. Along the way
 Cheerly they fare : behind, the keepers stay ;
 These with their watchful dogs (a constant guard)
 Supply his absence, and attend the herd. 225
 And now his city strikes the monarch's eyes,
 Alas, how chang'd ! a man of miseries !
 Propt on a staff, a beggar old and bare,
 In rags dishonest, flutt'ring with the air !
 Now pass'd the rugged road, they journey down 230
 The cavern'd way descending to the town,
 Where, from the rock, with liquid lapse distills
 A limpid fount, that, spread in parting rills,
 Its current thence to serve the city brings ;
 An useful work ! adorn'd by ancient kings. 235
 Neritus, Ithacus, Polyctor there
 In sculptur'd stone immortaliz'd their care,
 In marble urns receiv'd it from above,
 And shaded with a green surrounding grove ;
 Where silver alders, in high arches twin'd, 240
 Drink the cool stream, and tremble to the wind.
 Beneath, sequester'd to the nymphs, is seen
 A mossy altar, deep embow'r'd in green ;
 Where constant vows by travellers are paid,
 And holy horrors solemnize the shade. 245
 Here with his goats (not vow'd to sacred flame,
 But pamper'd luxury) Melanthius came ;
 Two grooms attend him. With an envious look
 He ey'd the stranger, and imperious spoke.
 The good old proverb how this pair fulfil ! 250
 One rogue is usher to another still.
 Heav'n with a secret principle endu'd
 Mankind, to seek their own similitude.
 Where goes the swine-herd with that ill-look'd guest ?
 That giant-glutton, dreadful at a feast ! 255
 Full many a post have those broad shoulders worn,
 From ev'ry great man's gate repuls'd with scorn ;
 To

274 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book XVII.

To no brave prize aspir'd the worthless swain,
 'Twas but for scraps he ask'd, and ask'd in vain.
 To beg, than work, he better understands ; 260
 Or we perhaps might take him off thy hands.
 For any office could the slave be good,
 To cleanse the fold, or help the kids to food ;
 If any labour those big joints could learn,
 Some whey, to wash his bowels, he might earn. 265
 To cringe, to whine, his idle hands to spread,
 Is all by which that graceless maw is fed.
 Yet hear me ! if thy impudence but dare
 Approach yon walls, I prophesy thy fare :
 Dearly, full dearly shalt thou buy thy bread, 270
 With many a footstool thund'ring at thy head.

He thus : nor insolent of word alone,
 Spurn'd with his rustic heel his king unknown ;
 Spurn'd, but not mov'd : he like a pillar stood,
 Nor stirr'd an inch, contemptuous, from the road : 275
 Doubtful, or with his staff to strike him dead,
 Or greet the pavement with his worthless head.
 Short was that doubt ; to quell his rage inur'd,
 The hero stood self-conquer'd, and endur'd.
 But hateful of the wretch, Eumæus heav'd 280
 His hands obtesting, and this pray'r conceiv'd.
 Daughters of Jove ! who from th' æthereal bow'rs
 Descend to swell the springs, and feed the flow'rs !
 Nymphs of this fountain ! to whose sacred names
 Our rural victims mount in blazing flames ! 285
 To whom Ulysses' piety preferr'd
 The yearly firstlings of his flock and herd ;
 Succeed my wish ; your votary restore :
 Oh be some God his convoy to our shore !
 Due pains shall punish then this slave's offence, 290
 And humble all his airs of insolence,
 Who, proudly stalking, leaves the herds at large,
 Commences courtier, and neglects his charge.

What mutters he, (Melanthius sharp rejoins),
 This crafty miscreant big with dark designs ? 295
 The day shall come, nay 'tis already near,
 When, slave ! to sell thee at a price too dear,

Must

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Must be my care ; and hence transport thee o'er,
 (A load and scandal to this happy shore.)
 Oh ! that as surely great Apollo's dart, 300
 Or some brave suitor's sword, might pierce the heart
 Of the proud son, as that we stand this hour
 In lasting safety from the father's pow'r.

So spoke the wretch ; but shunning farther fray,
 Turn'd his proud step, and left them on their way. 305
 Straight to the feastful palace he repair'd,
 Familiar enter'd, and the banquet shar'd ;
 Beneath Eurymachus, his patron-lord,
 He took his place, and plenty heap'd the board.

Meantime they heard, soft-circling in the sky, 310
 Sweet airs ascend, and heav'nly minstrelsy ;
 (For Phemius to the lyre attun'd the strain :)
 Ulysses hearken'd, then address'd the swain.

Well may this palace admiration claim,
 Great, and respondent to the master's fame ! 315
 Stage above stage th' imperial structure stands,
 Holds the chief honours, and the town commands :
 High walls and battlements the courts inclose,
 And the strong gates defy a host of foes.
 Far other cares its dwellers now employ ; 320
 The throng'd assembly, and the feast of joy :
 I see the smokes of sacrifice aspire,
 And hear (what graces ev'ry feast) the lyre.

Then thus Eumæus : Judge we which were best ;
 Amidst yon revellers a sudden guest 325
 Chuse you to mingle, while behind I stay ?
 Or I first ent'ring introduce the way ?
 Wait for a space without, but wait not long ;
 This is the house of violence and wrong :
 Some rude insult thy rev'rend age may bear ; 330
 For like their lawless lords the servants are.

Just is, oh friend ! thy caution, and address
 (Reply'd the chief) to no unheedful breast ;
 The wrongs and injuries of base mankind
 Fresh to my sense, and always in my mind. 335
 The bravely-patient to no fortune yields ;
 On rolling oceans, and in fighting fields,

Storms

276 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book XVII.

Storms have I pass'd, and many a stern debate;
And now in humbler scene submit to fate.
What cannot Want? the best she will expose, 340
And I am learn'd in all her train of woes;
She fills with navies, hosts, and loud alarms
The sea, the land, and shakes the world with arms!

Thus near the gates, conferring, as they drew,
Argus, the dog, his ancient master knew; 345
He, not unconscious of the voice and tread,
Lifts to the sound his ear, and rears his head.

Bred by Ulysses, nourish'd at his board,
But ah! not fated long to please his lord!
To him his swiftness and his strength were vain; 350
The voice of glory call'd him o'er the main.

Till then in ev'ry sylvan chace renown'd,
With Argus, Argus, rung the woods around;
With him the youth pursu'd the goat or fawn,
Or trac'd the mazy lev'ret o'er the lawn. 355

Now left to man's ingratitude he lay,
Unhous'd, neglected, in the public way;
And where on heaps the rich manure was spread,
Obscene with reptiles, took his sordid bed.

He knew his lord; he knew, and strove to meet, 360
In vain he strove, to crawl, and kiss his feet;
Yet (all he could) his tail, his ears, his eyes
Salute his master, and confess his joys.
Soft pity touch'd the mighty master's soul;
Adown his cheek a tear unbidden stole, 365
Stole unperceiv'd; he turn'd his head, and dry'd
The drop humane: then thus impassion'd cry'd.

What noble beast in this abandon'd state
Lies here all helpless at Ulysses' gate?
His bulk and beauty speak no vulgar praise; 370
If, as he seems, he was in better days,
Some care his age deserves: or was he priz'd
For worthless beauty! therefore now despis'd?
Such dogs and men there are, mere things of state,
And always cherish'd by their friends, the great. 375

Not Argus so, (Eumæus thus rejoin'd),
But serv'd a master of a nobler kind,

Who

Who never, never shall behold him more !
 Long, long since perish'd on a distant shore !
 Oh had you seen him, vig'rous, bold, and young, 380
 Swift as a stag, and as a lion strong ;
 Him no fell savage on the plain withstood,
 None 'scap'd him, bosom'd in the gloomy wood ;
 His eye how piercing, and his scent how true,
 To wind the vapour in the tainted dew ! 385
 Such, when Ulysses left his natal coast ;
 Now years unnerve him, and his lord is lost !
 The women keep the gen'rous creature bare,
 A sleek and idle race is all their care :
 The master gone, the servants what restrains ? 390
 Or dwells humanity where riot reigns ?
 Jove fix'd it certain, that whatever day
 Makes man a slave, takes half his worth away.

This said, the honest herdsman strode before :
 The musing monarch pauses at the door. 395
 The dog, whom fate had granted to behold
 His lord, when twenty tedious years had roll'd,
 Takes a last look, and having seen him, dies ;
 So clos'd for ever faithful Argus' eyes !

And now Telemachus, the first of all, 400
 Observ'd Eumæus ent'ring in the hall ;
 Distant he saw, across the shady dome ;
 Then gave a sign, and beckon'd him to come.
 There stood an empty seat, where late was plac'd,
 In order due, the steward of the feast, 405
 (Who now was busied carving round the board) ;
 Eumæus took, and plac'd it near his lord.
 Before him instant was the banquet spread,
 And the bright basket pil'd with loaves of bread.

Next came Ulysses, lowly at the door, 410
 A figure despicable, old, and poor,
 In squalid vests with many a gaping rent,
 Propt on a staff, and trembling as he went.
 Then, resting on the threshold of the gate,
 Against a cypress pillar lean'd his weight ; 415
 (Smooth'd by the workman to a polish'd plain) ;
 The thoughtful son beheld, and call'd his swain :

† A a

These

278 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book XVII.

These viands, and this bread, Eumæus ! bear,
 And let yon mendicant our plenty share :
 Then let him circle round the suitors' board, 420
 And try the bounty of each gracious lord.
 Bold let him ask, encourag'd thus by me ;
 How ill, alas ! do want and shame agree ?

His lord's command the faithful servant bears ;
 The seeming beggar answers with his pray'rs. 425
 Bless'd be Telemachus ! in ev'ry deed
 Inspire him, Jove ! in ev'ry wish succeed !
 This said, the portion from his son convey'd
 With smiles receiving, on his scrip he laid.
 Long as the minstrel swept the sounding wire, 430
 He fed, and ceas'd when silence held the lyre.
 Soon as the suitors from the banquet rose,
 Minerva prompts the man of mighty woes
 To tempt their bounties with a suppliant's art,
 And learn the gen'rous from th' ignoble heart ; 435
 (Not but his soul, resentful as humane,
 Dooms to full vengeance all th' offending train) ;
 With speaking eyes, and voice of plaintive sound,
 Humble he moves, imploring all around.
 The proud feel pity, and relief bestow, 440
 With such an image touch'd of human wo ;
 Inquiring all, their wonder they confess,
 And eye the man, majestic in distress.

While thus they gaze and question with their eyes,
 The bold Mekanthius to their thought replies. 445
 My lords ! this stranger of gigantic port
 The good Eumæus usher'd to your court.
 Full well I mark'd the features of his face,
 Though all unknown his clime, or noble race.

And is this present, swineherd ! of thy hand ? 450
 Bring'st thou these vagrants to infest the land ?
 (Returns Antinous with retorted eye) ;
 Objects uncouth ! to check the genial joy.
 Enough of these our court already grace,
 Of giant stomach, and of famish'd face. 455
 Such guests Eumæus to his country brings,
 To share our feast, and lead the life of kings.

To

To whom the hospitable swain rejoin'd :
 Thy passion, prince, belies thy knowing mind.
 Who calls, from distant nations to his own, 460
 The poor, distinguish'd by their wants alone ?
 Round the wide world are sought those men divine
 Who public structures raise, or who design ;
 Those to whose eyes the Gods their ways reveal,
 Or bless with salutary arts to heal ; 465
 But chief to poets such respect belongs,
 By rival nations courted for their songs ;
 These states invite, and mighty kings admire,
 Wide as the sun displays his vital fire.
 It is not so with want ! how few that feed 470
 A wretch unhappy, merely for his need ?
 Unjust to me and all that serve the state,
 To love Ulysses is to raise thy hate.
 For me suffice the approbation won
 Of my great mistress, and her godlike son. 475

To him Telemachus : No more incense
 The man by nature prone to insolence :
 Injurious minds just answers but provoke ——
 Then turning to Antinous, thus he spoke.
 Thanks to thy care ! whose absolute command 480
 Thus drives the stranger from our court and land.
 Heav'n bless its owner with a better mind !
 From envy free, to charity inclin'd.
 This both Penelope and I afford :
 Then, prince ! be bounteous of Ulysses' board. 485
 To give another's is thy hand so slow ?
 So much more sweet, to spoil, than to bestow ?

Whence, great Telemachus ! this lofty strain ?
 (Antinous cries with insolent disdain).
 Portions like mine if ev'ry suitor gave, 490
 Our walls this-twelvemonth should not see the slave.

He spoke, and lifting high above the board
 His pond'rous footstool, shook it at his lord.
 The rest with equal hand conferr'd the bread ;
 He fill'd his scrip, and to the threshold sped ; 495
 But first before Antinous stopt, and said.

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Bestow, my friend! thou dost not seem the worst
 Of all the Greeks, but prince-like and the first;
 Then as in dignity, be first in worth,
 And I shall praise thee thro' the boundless earth. 500
 Once I enjoy'd in luxury of state
 Whate'er gives man the envy'd name of great;
 Wealth, servants, friends, were mine in better days;
 And hospitality was then my praise;
 In ev'ry sorrowing soul I pour'd delight, 505
 And poverty stood smiling in my sight.
 But Jove, all governing, whose only will
 Determines fate, and mingles good with ill,
 Sent me (to punish my pursuit of gain)
 With roving pirates o'er th' Ægyptian main. 510
 By Ægypt's silver flood our ships we moor;
 Our spies commission'd straight the coast explore;
 But impotent of mind, with lawless will
 The country ravage, and the natives kill.
 The spreading clamour to their city flies, 515
 And horse and foot in mingled tumult rise:
 The redd'ning dawn reveals the hostile fields
 Horrid with bristly spears, and gleaming shields:
 Jove thunder'd on their side: our guilty head 519
 We turn'd to flight; the gath'ring vengeance spread }
 On all parts round, and heaps on heaps lay dead.
 Some few the foes in servitude detain;
 Death ill exchang'd for bondage and for pain!
 Unhappy me a Cyprian took aboard,
 And gave to Dmetor, Cyprus' haughty lord: 525
 Hither, to 'scape his chains, my course I steer,
 Still curs'd by fortune, and insulted here!
 To whom Antinous thus his rage express'd.
 What God has plagu'd us with this gormand guest?
 Unless at distance, wretch! thou keep behind, 530
 Another isle, than Cyprus more unkind;
 Another Ægypt, shalt thou quickly find. }
 From all thou begg'st, a bold audacious slave;
 Nor all can give so much as thou canst crave.
 Nor wonder I, at such profusion shown; 535
 Shameless they give, who give what's not their own.
 The

Book XVII. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 281

The chief, retiring: Souls, like that in thee,
 Ill suit such forms of grace and dignity.
 Nor will that hand to utmost need afford
 The smallest portion of a wasteful board, 540
 Whose luxury whole patrimonies sweeps,
 Yet starving want, amidst the riot, weeps.

The haughty suitor with resentment burns,
 And sourly smiling, this reply returns.
 Take that, ere yet thou quit this princely throng: 545
 And dumb for ever be thy stand'rous tongue!
 He said, and high the whirling tripod flung.
 His shoulder-blade receiv'd th' ungentle shock;
 He stood, and mov'd not, like a marble rock;
 But shook his thoughtful head, nor more complain'd, 550
 Sedate of soul, his character sustain'd,
 And inly form'd revenge: then back withdrew;
 Before his feet the well-fill'd scip he threw,
 And thus with semblance mild address'd the crew.

May what I speak your princely minds approve, 555
 Ye peers and rivals in this noble love!
 Not for the hurt I grieve, but for the cause.
 If, when the sword our country's quarrel draws,
 Or if defending what is justly dear,
 From Mars impartial some broad wound we bear, 560
 The gen'rous motive dignifies the scar.
 But for mere want, how hard to suffer wrong?
 Want brings enough of other ills along!
 Yet if injustice never be secure,
 If fiends revenge, and Gods assert the poor, 565
 Death shall lay low the proud aggressor's head,
 And make the dust Antinous' bridal bed.

Peace, wretch! and eat thy bread without offence,
 (The suitor cry'd), or force shall drag thee hence,
 Scourge thro' the public street, and cast thee there, 570
 A mangled carcase for the hounds to tear.

His furious deed the gen'ral anger mov'd,
 All, ev'n the worst, condemn'd; and some reprov'd.
 Was ever chief for wars like these renown'd?
 Ill fits the stranger and the poor to wound. 575

Unblest'd thy hand ! if in this low disguise
Wander, perhaps, some inmate of the skies ;
They (curious oft of mortal actions) deign,
In forms like these, to round the earth and main,
Just and unjust recording in their mind, 580
And with sure eyes inspecting all mankind.

Telemachus, absorpt in thought severe,
Nourish'd deep anguish, tho' he shed no tear ;
But the dark brow of silent sorrow shook :
While thus his mother to her virgins spoke : 585
" On him and his may the bright God of day.
" That base, inhospitable blow repay !"
The nurse replies : " If Jove receives my pray'r,
" Not one survives to breathe to-morrow's air."

All, all are foes, and mischief is their end ; 590
An inous most to gloomy death a friend,
(Replies the queen) ; the stranger begg'd their grace,
And melting pity soften'd ev'ry face ;
From ev'ry other hand redress he found,
But fell Antinous answer'd with a wound. 595
Amidst her maids thus spoke the prudent queen,
Then bade Eumæus call the pilgrim in.
Much of th' experienc'd man I long to hear,
If or his certain eye, or list'ning ear
Have learn'd the fortunes of my wand'ring lord ? 600
Thus she, and good Eumæus took the word.

A private audience if thy grace impart,
The stranger's words may ease the royal heart.
His sacred eloquence in balm distils,
And the sooth'd heart with secret pleasure fills. 605
Three days have spent their beams, three nights have run
Their silent journey, since his tale begun,
Unfinish'd yet ; and yet I thirst to hear !
As when some heav'n-taught poet charms the ear,
(Suspending sorrow with celestial strain 610
Breath'd from the Gods to soften human pain),
Time steals away with unregarded wing,
And the soul hears him, tho' he cease to sing.

Ulysses late he saw, on Cretan ground,
(His father's guest), for Minos' birth renown'd. 615
He

He now but waits the wind, to waft him o'er,
With boundless treasure, from Thesprotia's shore.

To this the queen : The wand'rer let me hear,
While yon luxurious race indulge their cheer,
Devour the grazing ox and browsing goat, 620
And turn my gen'rous vintage down their throat.
For where's an arm, like thine, Ulysses ! strong,
To curb wild riot, and to punish wrong ?

She spoke. Telemachus then sneez'd aloud ;
Constrain'd, his nostril echo'd thro' the croud. 625

The smiling queen the happy omen bless'd ;
" So may these impious fall, by fate oppress'd !"

Then to Eumæus : Bring the stranger, fly !
And if my questions meet a true reply,
Grac'd with a decent robe he shall retire, 630
A gift in season which his wants require.

Thus spoke Penelope. Eumæus flies
In duteous haste, and to Ulysses cries :
The queen invites thee, venerable guest !
A secret instinct moves her troubled breast, 635

Of her long absent lord from thee to gain
Some light, and sooth her soul's eternal pain.

If true, if faithful thou, her grateful mind
Of decent robes a present has design'd :

So finding favour in the royal eye, 640
Thy other wants her subjects shall supply.

Fair truth alone (the patient man reply'd)
My words shall dictate, and my lips shall guide.

To him, to me, one common lot was giv'n,
In equal woes, alas ! involv'd by heav'n. 645

Much of his fates I know ; but check'd by fear
I stand : the hand of violence is here :

Here boundless wrongs the starry skies invade,
And injur'd suppliants seek in vain for aid.

Let for a space the pensive queen attend, 650
Nor claim my story till the sun descend ;

Then in such robes as suppliants may require,
Compos'd and cheerful by the genial fire,

When loud uproar and lawless riot cease,
Shall her pleas'd ear receive my words in peace. 655

Swift

Swift to the queen returns the gentle swain :
 And say, (she cries), does fear, or shame, detain
 The cautious stranger ? With the begging kind
 Shame suits but ill. Eumæus thus rejoin'd.

He only asks a more propitious hour, 660
 And shuns (who would not ?) wicked men in pow'r ;
 At ev'ning mild (meet season to confer)
 By turns to question, and by turns to hear.

Whoe'er this guest, (the prudent queen replies),
 His ev'ry step and ev'ry thought is wise. 665
 For men like these on earth he shall not find,
 In all the miscreant race of humankind.

Thus she. Eumæus all her words attends,
 And parting, to the suitor-pow'r's descends ;
 There seeks Telemachus, and thus apart 670
 In whispers breathes the fondness of his heart.

The time, my lord, invites me to repair
 Hence to the lodge ; my charge demands my care.
 These sons of murder thirst thy life to take ;
 O guard it, guard it, for thy servant's sake ! 675

Thanks to my friend, (he cries) ; but now the hour
 Of night draws on, go seek the rural bow'r :
 But first refresh : and at the dawn of day
 Hither a victim to the Gods convey.

Our life to heav'n's immortal pow'r's we trust, 680
 Safe in their care, for heav'n protects the just.

Observant of his voice, Eumæus sat
 And fed recumbent on a chair of state.
 Then instant rose, and as he mov'd along.
 'Twas riot all amid the suitor-throng, 685
 They feast, they dance, and raise the mirthful song. }
 Till now declining tow'rd the close of day,
 The sun obliquely shot his dewy ray.

T H E
O D Y S S E Y.

B O O K XVIII.

T H E A R G U M E N T.

The fight of Ulysses and Irus.

The beggar Irus insults Ulysses: the suitors promote the quarrel, in which Irus is worsted, and miserably handled. Penelope descends, and receives the presents of the suitors. The dialogue of Ulysses with Eurymachus.

WHile fix'd in thought the pensive hero sat,
A mendicant approach'd the royal gate;

A surly vagrant of the giant kind,

The stain of manhood, of a coward mind:

From feast to feast, insatiate to devour

He flew, attendant on the genial hour.

Him on his mother's knees, when babe he lay,

She nam'd Arnæus on his natal day:

But Irus his associates call'd the boy,

Practis'd the common messenger to fly;

Irus, a name expressive of th' employ.

From his own roof, with meditated blows,

He strove to drive the man of mighty woes.¹¹

Hence dotard, hence! and timely speed thy way,

Left, dragg'd in vengeance, thou repent thy stay; ¹⁵

See how with nods assent yon princely train

But honouring age, in mercy I refrain:

In peace away! lest, if persuasions fail,

This arm with blows more eloquent prevail.

To

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To whom, with stern regard : O insolence, 20
Indecently to rail without offence !

What bounty gives, without a rival share ;
I ask, what harms not thee, to breathe this air :
Alike on alms we both precarious live :
And canst thou envy, when the great relieve ? 25

Know from the bounteous heav'ns all riches flow,
And what man gives, the Gods by man bestow :
Proud as thou art, henceforth no more be proud,
Lest I imprint my vengeance in thy blood ;
Old as I am, should once my fury burn, 30
How wouldst thou fly, nor even in thought return !

Mere woman-glutton ! (thus the churl reply'd),
A tongue so flippant, with a throat so wide !
Why cease I, Gods ! to dash those teeth away,
Like some vile boar's, that greedy of his prey 35
Uproots the bearded corn ? rise, try the fight,
Gird well thy loins, approach, and feel my might :
Sure of defeat, before the peers engage ;
Unequal fight ! when youth contends with age !

Thus in a wordy war their tongues display 40
More fierce intents, preluding to the fray :
Antinous hears, and in a jovial vein,
Thus with loud laughter to the suitor-train.

This happy day in mirth, my friends, employ,
And lo ! the Gods conspire to crown our joy. 45
See ready for the fight, and hand to hand,
Yon surly mendicants-contentious stand :
Why urge we not to blows ! Well pleas'd they spring
Swift from their seats, and thick'ning form a ring.

To whom Antinous : Lo ! enrich'd with blood, 50
A kid's well-fatted entrails (tasteful food !)
On glowing embers lie ; on him bestow
The choicest portion who subdues his foe ;
Grant him unrival'd in these walls to stay,
The sole attendant on the genial day. 55

The lords applaud : Ulysses then with art,
And fears well-feign'd, disguis'd his dauntless heart :

Worn as I am with age, decay'd with wo,
Say, is it baseness to decline the foe ?

Hard

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Hard conflict ! when calamity and age 63
 With vig'rous youth, unknown to cares, engage !
 Yet, fearful of disgrace, to try the day
 Imperious hunger bids, and I obey :
 But swear, impartial arbiters of right,
 Swear to stand neutral, while we cope in fight. 65

The peers assent : when straight his sacred head
 Telemachus uprais'd, and sternly said.

Stranger, if prompted to chastise the wrong
 Of this bold insolent, confide, be strong !
 Th' injurious Greek that dares attempt a blow, 70
 That instant makes Telemachus his foe ;
 And these * my friends shall guard the sacred ties
 Of hospitality, for they are wise.

Then girding his strong loins, the king prepares
 To close in combat, and his body bares ; 75
 Broad spread his shoulders, and his nervous thighs
 By just degrees, like well-turn'd columns, rise :
 Ample his chest, his arms are round and long,
 And each strong joint Minerva knits more strong,
 (Attendant on her chief) : the suitor-croud 80
 With wonder gaze, and gazing speak aloud.

Irus ! alas ! shall Irus be no more !
 Black fate impends, and this th' avenging hour !
 Gods ! how his nerves a matchless strength proclaim ;
 Swell o'er his well-strung limbs, and brace his frame !
 Then pale with fears, and sick'ning at the sight, 86
 They dragg'd th' unwilling Irus to the fight ;
 From his blank visage fled the coward blood,
 And his flesh trembled as aghast he stood.

O that such baseness should disgrace the light ! 90
 O hide it, death, in everlasting night !
 (Exclaims Antinous), can a vig'rous foe
 Meanly decline to combat age and wo ?
 But hear me, wretch ! if recreant in the fray,
 That huge bulk yield this ill-contested day, 95
 Instant thou sail'st, to Echetus resign'd ;
 A tyrant, fiercest of the tyrant-kind,

* Antinous and Eurymachus.

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Who casts thy mangled ears and nose a prey
To hungry dogs, and lops the man away.

While with indignant scorn he sternly spoke, 100
In ev'ry joint the trembling Irus shook ;
Now front to front each frowning champion stands,
And poises high in air his adverse hands.

The chief yet doubts, or to the shades below
To fell the giant at one vengeful blow, 105
Or save his life ; and soon his life to save
The king resolves, for mercy sways the brave.

That instant Irus his huge arm extends,
Full on his shoulder the rude weight descends :
The sage Ulysses, fearful to disclose 110

The hero latent in the man of woes,
Check'd half his might ; yet rising to the stroke,
His jaw-bone dash'd ; the crashing jaw-bone broke :
Down dropp'd he stupid from the stunning wound ;
His feet extended, quiv'ring, beat the ground ; 115
His mouth and nostrils spout a purple flood ;
His teeth, all shatter'd, rush immix'd with blood.

The peers, transported, as outstretch'd he lies,
With bursts of laughter rend the vaulted skies.

Then dragg'd along, all bleeding from the wound,
His length of carcase trailing prints the ground ; 121
Rais'd on his feet, again he reels, he falls,
Till propp'd, reclining on the palace-walls :
Then to his hand a staff the victor gave,
And thus with just reproach address'd the slave. 125

There terrible, affright the dogs, and reign
A dreaded tyrant o'er the bestial train !
But mercy to the poor and stranger show,
Lest heav'n in vengeance send some mightier wo.

Scornful he spoke, and o'er his shoulders flung 130
The broad patch'd scrip ; the scrip in tatters hung }
Ill-join'd, and knotted to a twisted thong.
Then, turning short, disdain'd a further stay,
But to the palace measur'd back the way.
There as he rested, gath'ring in a ring 135
The peers with smiles address'd their unknown king.

Stranger,

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Stranger, may Jove, and all th'aëreal pow'rs,
With ev'ry blessing crown thy happy hours !
Our freedom to thy prowess'd arm we owe
From bold intrusion of thy coward foe ; 140
Instant the flying sail the slave shall wing
To Echetus, the monster of a king.

While pleas'd he hears, Antinous bears the food,
A kid's well-fatted entrails, rich with blood :
The bread from canisters of shining mold 145
Amphinomus ; and wines that laugh in gold :
And oh ! (he mildly cries), may heav'n display
A beam of glory o'er thy future day !
Alas ! the brave too oft is doom'd to bear
The gripes of poverty, and stings of care. 150

To whom with thought mature the king replies :
The tongue speaks wisely, when the soul is wise ;
Such was thy father ! in imperial state,
Great without vice, that oft attends the great :
Nor from the fire art thou, the son, declin'd ; 155
Then hear my words, and grave them in thy mind !
Of all that breathes, or grov'ling creeps on earth,
Most vain is man ! calamitous by birth.
To-day with pow'r elate, in strength he blooms ;
The haughty creature on that pow'r presumes : 160
Anon from heav'n a sad reverse he feels ;
Untaught to bear, 'gainst heav'n the wretch rebels.
For man is changeful, as his blifs or wo ;
Too high when prosp'rous, when distress'd too low.
There was a day, when with the scornful great 165
I swell'd in pomp and arrogance of state ;
Proud of the pow'r that to high birth belongs ;
And us'd that pow'r to justify my wrongs.
'Then let not man be proud : but firm of mind,
Bear the best humbly, and the worst resign'd ; 170
Be dumb when heav'n afflicts ! unlike yon train
Of haughty spoilers, insolently vain ;
Who make their queen and all her wealth a prey :
But vengeance and Ulysses wing their way.
O mayst thou, favour'd by some guardian pow'r, 175
Far, far be distant in that deathful hour !

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For sure I am, if stern Ulysses breathe,
These lawless riots end in blood and death.

Then to the gods the rosy juice he pours,
And the drain'd goblet to the chief restores. 180
Stung to the soul, o'ercast with holy dread,
He shook the graceful honours of his head ;
His boding mind the future wo foretells :
In vain ! by great Telemachus he falls,
For Pallas seals his doom : all sad he turns 185
To join the peers ; resumes his throne, and mourns.

Meanwhile Minerva with instinctive fires
Thy soul, Penelope, from heav'n inspires ;
With flatt'ring hopes the suitors to betray,
And seem to meet, yet fly, the bridal day ; 190
Thy husband's wonder, and thy son's, to raise,
And crown the mother and the wife with praise.
Then, while the streaming sorrow dims her eyes,
Thus with a transient smile the matron cries :

Eurynomè ! to go where riot reigns 195
I feel an impulse, though my soul disdains ;
To my lov'd son the snares of death to show,
And in the traitor-friend unmask the foe ;
Who smooth of tongue, in purpose insincere,
Hides fraud in smiles, while death is ambush'd there.

Go warn thy son, nor be the warning vain, 201
(Reply'd the sagest of the royal train),
But bath'd, anointed, and adorn'd descend ;
Pow'rful of charms, bid ev'ry grace attend ;
The tide of flowing tears a while suppress ; 205
Tears but indulge the sorrow, not repress.
Some joy remains : to thee a son is giv'n,
Such as in fondness parents ask of heav'n.

Ah me ! forbear, returns the queen, forbear ;
Oh ! talk not, talk not of vain beauty's care ! 210
No more I bathe, since he no longer sees
Those charms, for whom alone I wish to please.
The day that bore Ulysses from this coast,
Blasted the little bloom these cheeks could boast.
But instant bid Autonoe descend, 215
Instant Hippodamè our steps attend ;

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Ill suits it female virtue, to be seen
Alone, indecent, in the walks of men.

Then while Eurynomè the mandate bears,
From heav'n Minerva shoots with guardian cares : 220
O'er all her senses, as the couch she prest,
She pours a pleasing, deep, and deathlike rest,
With ev'ry beauty every feature arms,
Bids her cheeks glow, and lights up all her charms,
In her love-darting eyes awakes the fires, 225
(Immortal gifts ! to kindle soft desires),
From limb to limb an air majestic sheds,
And the pure iv'ry o'er her bosom spreads.
Such Venus shines, when with a measur'd bound
She smoothly gliding swims th' harmonious round, 230
When with the Graces in the dance she moves,
And fires the gazing Gods with ardent loves.

Then to the skies her flight Minerva bends,
And to the queen the damsel-train descends :
Wak'd at their steps, her flowing eyes uncloze ; 235
The tear she wipes, and thus renews her woes.

Howe'er 'tis well ; that sleep a while can free,
With soft forgetfulness, a wretch like me !
Oh ! were it giv'n to yield this transient breath,
Send, oh Diana ! send the sleep of death ! 240
Why must I waste a tedious life in tears,
Nor bury in the silent grave my cares ?
O my Ulysses ! ever honour'd name !
For thee I mourn, till death dissolves my frame.

Thus wailing, slow and sadly she descends, 245
On either hand a damsel-train attends :
Full where the dome its shining valves expands,
Radiant before the gazing peers she stands ;
A veil translucent o'er her brow display'd,
Her beauty seems, and only seems, to shade : 250
Sudden she lightens in their dazzled eyes,
And sudden flames in ev'ry bosom rise ;
They send their eager souls with ev'ry look,
Till silence thus th' imperial matron broke :

O why ! my son, why now no more appears 255
That warmth of soul that urg'd thy younger years ?

Thy riper days no growing worth impart,
 A man in stature, still a boy in heart !
 Thy well-knit frame, unprofitably strong,
 Speaks thee an hero, from an hero sprung : 260
 But the just Gods in vain those gifts bestow,
 O wise alone in form, and brave in show !
 Heav'ns ! could a stranger feel oppression's hand
 Beneath thy roof, and couldst thou tamely stand ?
 If thou the stranger's righteous cause decline, 265
 His is the suff'rance, but the shame is thine.

To whom, with filial awe, the prince returns :
 That gen'rous soul with just resentment burns ;
 Yet taught by time, my heart has learn'd to glow
 For others good, and melt at others wo : 270
 But impotent these riots to repel,
 I bear their outrage, tho' my soul rebel :
 Helpless amid the snares of death I tread,
 And numbers leagu'd in impious union dread.
 But now no crime is theirs : this wrong proceeds 275
 From Irus, and the guilty Irus bleeds.
 O would to Jove ! or her whose arms display
 The shield of Jove ! or him who rules the day !
 That yon proud suitors, who licentious tread
 These courts, within these courts like Irus bled : 280
 Whose loose head tott'ring, as with wine oppress'd,
 Obliquely drops, and nodding knocks his breast ;
 Pow'rless to move, his stagg'ring feet deny
 The coward wretch the privilege to fly.

Then to the queen Eurymachus replies : 285
 O justly lov'd, and not more fair than wife !
 Should Greece through all her hundred states survey
 Thy finish'd charms, all Greece would own thy sway,
 In rival crouds contest the glorious prize,
 Dispeopling realms to gaze upon thy eyes : 290
 O woman ! loveliest of the lovely kind,
 In body perfect, and complete in mind !

Ah me ! (returns the queen), when from this shore
 Ulysses sail'd, then beauty was no more !
 The Gods decreed these eyes no more should keep 295
 Their wonted grace, but only serve to weep.

Should

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Should he return, whate'er my beauties prove,
My virtues last ; my brightest charm is love.
Now, grief, thou all art mine ! the Gods o'ercaſt
My ſoul with woes, that long, ah long muſt laſt ! 300
Too faithfully my heart retains the day
That ſadly tore my royal lord away :
He graſp'd my hand, And, oh my ſpouſe ! I leave
Thy arms, (he cry'd), perhaps to find a grave :
Fame ſpeaks the Trojans bold ; they boaſt the ſkill 305
To give the feather'd arrow wings to kill,
To dart the ſpear, and guide the ruſhing car
With dreadful inroad through the walks of war.
My ſentence is gone forth, and 'tis decreed
Perhaps by righteous heav'n that I muſt bleed ! 310
My father, mother, all, I truſt to thee ;
To them, to them transfer the love of me :
But when my ſon grows man, the royal ſway
Reſign, and happy be thy bridal day !
Such were his words ; and Hymen now prepares 315
To light his torch, and give me up to cares ;
Th' afflictive hand of wrathful Jove to bear :
A wretch the moſt complete that breathes the air !
Fall'n ev'n below the rights to woman due !
Careleſs to pleaſe, with insolence ye woo ! 320
The gen'rous lovers, ſtudious to ſucceed,
Bid their whole herds and flocks in banquets bleed ;
By precious gifts the vow ſincere diſplay :
You, only you, make her ye love your prey.
Well pleas'd Ulyſſes hears his queen deceive 325
The ſuitor-train, and raiſe a thirſt to give :
False hopes ſhe kindles, but thoſe hopes betray,
And promiſe, yet elude the bridal day.
While yet ſhe ſpeaks, the gay Antinous cries :
Offspring of kings, and more than woman wiſe ! 330
'Tis right ; 'tis man's prerogative to give,
And cuſtom bids thee without ſhame receive ;
Yet never, never from thy dome we move,
Till Hymen lights the torch of ſpouſal love.
The peers diſpatch their heralds to convey 335
The gifts of love ; with ſpeed they take the way.

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A robe Antinous gives of shining dyes,
 The varying hues in gay confusion rise
 Rich from the artist's hand ! twelve clasps of gold
 Close to the less'ning waist the vest infold ; 340
 Down from the swelling loins, the vest unbound
 Floats in bright waves redundant o'er the ground.

A bracelet rich with gold, with amber gay,
 That shot effulgence like the solar ray,
 Eurymachus presents : and ear-rings bright, 345
 With triple stars, that cast a trembling light.
 Pisander bears a necklace, wrought with art ;
 And ev'ry peer, expressive of his heart,
 A gift bestows : this done, the queen ascends,
 And slow behind, her damsel-train attends. 350

Then to the dance they form the vocal strain,
 Till Hesperus leads forth the starry train ;
 And now he raises, as the day-light fades,
 His golden circlet in the deep'ning shades :
 Three vases heap'd with copious fires display 355
 O'er all the palace a fictitious day ;
 From space to space the torch wide-beaming burns,
 And sprightly damsels trim the rays by turns.

To whom the king : Ill suits your sex to stay
 Alone with men ! ye modest maids, away ! 360
 Go, with the queen the spindle guide, or cull
 (The partners of her cares) the silver wool ;
 Be it my task the torches to supply,
 Ev'n till the morning-lamp adorns the sky ;
 Ev'n till the morning, with unwearied care, 365
 Sleepless I watch ; for I have learn'd to bear.

Scornful they heard : Melantho, fair and young,
 (Melantho, from the loins of Dolius sprung,
 Who with the queen her years an infant led,
 With the soft fondness of a daughter bred), 370
 Chiefly derides : regardless of the cares
 Her queen endures, polluted joys she shares
 Nocturnal with Eurymachus ! With eyes
 That speak disdain, the wanton thus replies.
 • Oh ! whither wanders thy distemper'd brain, 375
 Thou bold intruder on a princely train ?

Hence

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Hence to the vagrant's rendezvous repair;
Or shun in some black forge the midnight-air.
Proceeds this boldness from a turn of soul,
Or flows licentious from the copious bowl? 380
Is it that vanquish'd Irus swells thy mind?
A foe may meet thee of a braver kind,
Who, short'ning with a storm of blows thy stay,
Shall send thee howling all in blood away!

To whom with frowns: O impudent in wrong! 385
Thy lord shall curb that insolence of tongue;
Know, to Telemachus I tell th' offence:
The scourge, the scourge shall lash thee into sense.

With conscious shame they hear the stern rebuke,
Nor longer durst sustain the sov'reign look. 390

Then to the servile task the monarch turns
His royal hands: each torch refulgent burns
With added day: meanwhile, in museful mood,
Absorpt in thought, on vengeance fix'd he stood.
And now the martial maid, by deeper wrongs 395
To rouse Ulysses, points the suitors tongues:
Scornful of age, to taunt the virtuous man,
Thoughtless and gay, Eurymachus began:

Hear me, (he cries), confederates and friends!
Some God, no doubt, this stranger kindly sends; 400
The shining baldness of his head survey,
It aids our torch-light, and reflects the ray. —

Then to the king that levell'd haughty Troy: —
Say, if large hire can tempt thee to employ
Those hands in work; to tend the rural trade, 405
To dress the walk, and form th' embow'ring shade?
So food and raiment constant will I give:
But idly thus thy soul prefers to live,
And starve by strolling, not by work to thrive.

To whom, incens'd: Should we, O prince, engage
In rival tasks, beneath the burning rage 411
Of summer-suns; were both constrain'd to wield,
Foodless, the sith along the burthen'd field;
Or should we labour, while the ploughshare wounds,
With steers of equal strength, th' allotted grounds; 415
Beneath

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Beneath my labours, how thy wond'ring eyes
Might see the fable field at once arise !
Should Jove dire war unloose, with spear, and shield,
And nodding helm, I tread th' ensanguin'd field, 419
Fierce in the van; then wouldst thou, wouldst thou,—
Misname me glutton in that glorious day ? [say,—
No, thy ill-judging thoughts the brave disgrace;
'Tis thou injurious art, not I am base.

Proud to seem brave among a coward train !
But know, thou art not valorous, but vain. 425
Gods ! should the stern Ulysses rise in might,
These gates would seem too narrow for thy flight.

While yet he speaks, Eurymachus replies,
With indignation flashing from his eyes.

Slave, I with justice might deserve the wrong, 430
Should I not punish that opprobrious tongue ;
Irrev'rend to the great, and uncontroll'd,
Art thou from wine, or innate folly, bold ?
Perhaps these outrages from Irus flow,
A worthless triumph o'er a worthless foe ! 435

He said, and with full force a footstool threw :
Whirl'd from his arm with erring rage it flew.
Ulysses, cautious of the vengeful foe,
Stoops to the ground, and disappoints the blow.
Not so a youth who deals the goblet round, 440
Full on his shoulder it inflicts a wound ;
Dash'd from his hand the sounding goblet flies,
He shrieks, he reels, he falls, and breathless lies.

Then wild uproar and clamour mounts the sky,
Till mutual thus the peers indignant cry ; 445
O had this stranger sunk to realms beneath,
To the black realms of darkness and of death,
Ere yet he trod these shores ! to strife he draws
Peer against peer ; and what the weighty cause ?
A vagabond ! for him the great destroy, 450
In vile ignoble jars, the feast of joy !

To whom the stern Telemachus uprose :
Gods ! what wild fury from the goblet flows ?
Whence this unguarded openness of soul,
But from the licence of the copious bowl ? 455

Or

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Or heav'n delusion sends. But hence, away !
Force I forbear, and without force obey.

Silent, abash'd, they hear the stern rebuke,
Till thus Amphinomus the silence broke.

True are his words ; and he whom truth offends, 460
Not with Telemachus, but truth contends.

Let not the hand of violence invade

The rev'rend stranger, or the spotless maid :

Retire we hence ! but crown with rosy wine

The flowing goblet to the pow'rs divine : 465

Guard he his guest beneath whose roof he stands ;

This justice, this the social right demands.

The peers assent ; the goblet Mulius crown'd

With purple juice, and bore in order round ;

Each peer successive his libation pours 470

To the blest'd Gods that fill th' aëreal bow'rs ;

Then swill'd with wine, with noise the crouds obey,

And rushing forth tumultuous reel away.

THE

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BOOK XIX.

THE ARGUMENT.

The discovery of Ulysses to Euryclea.

Ulysses and his son remove the weapons out of the armory. Ulysses, in conversation with Penelope, gives a fictitious account of his adventures; then assures her he had formerly entertained her husband in Crete, and describes exactly his person and dress; affirms to have heard of him in Phaeacia and Thesprotia, and that his return is certain, and within a month. He then goes to bathe, and is attended by Euryclea, who discovers him to be Ulysses by the scar upon his leg, which he formerly received in hunting the wild boar on Parnassus. The poet inserts a digression, relating that accident, with all its particulars.

Consulting secret with the blue-ey'd maid,
Still in the dome divine Ulysses staid :
Revenge mature for act inflam'd his breast;
And thus the son the fervent fire address'd.

Instant convey those steely stores of war
To distant rooms, dispos'd with secret care :
The cause demanded by the suitor-train,
To sooth their fears a specious reason feign :
Say, since Ulysses left his natal coast,
Obscene with smoke, their beamy lustre lost,
His arms deform'd, the roof they won't adorn :
From the glad walls inglorious lumber torn.

Suggest,

Book XIX. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 299

Suggest, that Jove the peaceful thought inspir'd,
Lest they by sight of swords to fury fir'd ;
Dishonest wounds, or violence of soul, 15
Defame the bridal feast, and friendly bowl.

The prince obedient to the sage command,
To Euryclea thus : The female band
In their apartments keep ; secure the doors :
These swarthy arms among the covert stores 20
Are seemlier hid ; my thoughtless youth they blame,
Imbrown'd with vapour of the smould'ring flame.

In happy hour, (pleas'd Euryclea cries),
Tutor'd by early woes, grow early wise !
Inspect with sharpen'd sight, and frugal care, 25
Your patrimonial wealth, a prudent heir.
But who the lighted taper will provide,
(The female train retir'd), your toils to guide ?

Without infringing hospitable right,
This guest (he cry'd) shall bear the guiding light : 30
I cheer no lazy vagrants with repast ;
They share the meal that earn it ere they taste.

He said ; from female ken she straight secures
The purpos'd deed, and guards the bolted doors :
Auxiliar to his son, Ulysses bears 35 }
The plummy crested helms, and pointed spears,
With shields indented deep in glorious wars.
Minerva viewless on her charge attends,
And with her golden lamp his toil befriends :
Not such the sickly beams, which unsincere 40
Gild the gross vapour of this nether sphere !
A present Deity the prince confess'd ;
And rapt with ecstacy the fire address'd.

What miracle thus dazzles with surprise !
Distinct in rows the radiant columns rise : 45
The walls, where-e'er my wond'ring sight I turn,
And roofs, amidst a blaze of glory burn !

Some visitant of pure æthereal race,
With his bright presence deigns the dome to grace.
Be calm, replies the fire ; to none impart, 50
But oft revolve the vision in thy heart :

Celestials,

300 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book XIX.

Celestials, mantled in excess of light,
Can visit unapproach'd by mortal sight.
Seek thou repose ; whilst here I sole remain,
T' explore the conduct of the female train : 55
The pensive queen perchance desires to know
The series of my toils, to sooth her wo.

With tapers flaming day his train attends,
His bright alcove th' obsequious youth ascends :
Soft slumb'rous shades his drooping eye-lids close, 60
Till on her eastern throne Aurora glows.

Whilst, forming plans of death, Ulysses staid
In council secret with the martial maid ;
Attendant nymphs in beauteous order wait,
The queen descending from her bow'r of state. 65
Her cheeks the warmer blush of Venus wear,
Chasten'd with coy Diana's pensive air.
An iv'ry seat with silver ringlets grac'd,
By fam'd Icmalius wrought, the menials plac'd :
With iv'ry silver'd thick the footstool shone, 70
O'er which the panther's various hide was thrown.
The sov'reign seat with graceful air she press'd ;
To diff'rent tasks their toil the nymphs address'd :
The golden goblets some, and some restor'd
From stains of luxury the polish'd board : 75
These to remove th' expiring embers came,
While those with unctuous fir foment the flame.

'Twas then Melantho with imperious mien
Renew'd th' attack, incontinent of spleen :
Avaunt, she cry'd, offensive to my sight ! 80
Deem not in ambush here to lurk by night,
Into the woman-state asquint to pry ;
A day-devourer, and an ev'ning-spy !
Vagrant, begone ! before this blazing brand
Shall urge —— and wav'd it hissing in her hand. 85

Th' insulted hero rolls his wrathful eyes ;
And, Why so turbulent of soul ? he cries :
Can these lean shrivel'd limbs unnerv'd with age,
These poor, but honest rags, enkindle rage ?
In crouds we wear the badge of hungry fate, 90
And beg, degraded from superior state !

Constrain'd !

Book XIX. HOMER's ODYSSEY. 321

Constrain'd ! a rent-charge on the rich I live ;
 Reduc'd to crave the good I once could give :
 A palace, wealth, and slaves I late possess'd,
 And all that makes the great be call'd the bless'd : 95
 My gate, an emblem of my open soul,
 Embrac'd the poor, and dealt a bounteous dole.
 Scorn not the sad reverse, injurious maid !
 'Tis Jove's high will, and be his will obey'd !
 Nor think thyself exempt : that rosy prime 100
 Must share the gen'ral doom of with'ring time :
 To some new channel soon the changeful tide
 Of royal grace th' offended queen may guide ;
 And her lov'd lord unplume thy tow'ring pride.
 Or were he dead, 'tis wisdom to beware : 105
 Sweet blooms the prince beneath Apollo's care ;
 Your deeds with quick impartial eye surveys ;
 Potent to punish what he cannot praise.

Her keen reproach had reach'd the sov'reign's ear ;
 Loquacious insolent ! (she cries), forbear : 110
 To thee the purpose of my soul I told ;
 Venial discourse, unblam'd, with him to hold :
 The storied labours of my wand'ring lord,
 To sooth my grief he haply may record.
 Yet him, my guest, thy venom'd rage hath stung : 115
 Thy head shall pay the forfeit of thy tongue !
 But thou on whom my palace-cares depend,
 Eurynomè, regard the stranger-friend :
 A seat, soft-spread with furry spoils, prepare ;
 Due-distant, for us both to speak and hear. 120

The menial fair obeys with duteous haste :
 A seat adorn'd with furry spoils she plac'd :
 Due-distant for discourse the hero sat ;
 When thus the sov'reign from her chair of state :
 Reveal, obsequious to my first demand, 125
 Thy name, thy lineage, and thy native land.

He thus : O queen ! whose far-resounding fame
 Is bounded only by the starry frame,
 Consummate pattern of imperial sway,
 Whose pious rule a warlike race obey ! 130

In wavy gold thy summer vales are dress'd ;
 Thy autumns bend with copious fruit oppress'd :
 With flocks and herds each grassy plain is stor'd ;
 And fish of ev'ry fin thy seas afford :
 Their affluent joys the grateful realms confess ; 133
 And bless the pow'r that still delights to bless.
 Gracious permit this pray'r, imperial dame !

Forbear to know my lineage, or my name :
 Urge not this breast to heave, these eyes to weep ;
 In sweet oblivion let my sorrow sleep ! 140
 My woes awak'd will violate your ear,
 And to this gay censorious train appear
 A winy vapour melting in a tear. }

Their gifts the Gods resum'd, (the queen rejoin'd),
 Exterior grace, and energy of mind, 145

When the dear partner of my nuptial joy,
 Auxiliar troops combin'd, to conquer Troy.
 My lord's protecting hand alone would raise
 My drooping verdure, and extend my praise !
 Peers from the distant Samian shore resort ; 150

Here with Dulichians join'd, besiege the court :
 Zacynthus, green with ever-shady groves,
 And Ithaca, presumptuous boast their loves :
 Obtruding on my choice a second lord,
 'They press the Hymenæan rite abhorr'd. 155

Misrule thus mingling with domestic cares,
 I live regardless of my state-affairs :
 Receive no stranger-guest, no poor relieve ;
 But ever for my lord in secret grieve !—
 This art, instinct by some cœlestial pow'r, 160
 I try'd, elusive of the bridal hour :

“ Ye peers,” I cry, “ who press to gain a heart,
 “ Where dead Ulysses claims no future part ;
 “ Rebate your loves, each rival suit suspend,
 “ Till this funereal web my labours end : 165
 “ Cease, till to good Laertes I bequeath
 “ A pall of state, the ornament of death.
 “ For when to fate he bows, each Grecian dame
 “ With just reproach were licens'd to defame,

“ Should

Book XIX. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 303

"Should he, long honour'd in supreme command, 170

"Want the last duties of a daughter's hand."

The fiction pleas'd! their loves I long elude;

The night still ravell'd what the day renew'd;

Three years successful in my art conceal'd,

My ineffectual fraud the fourth reveal'd:

175

Befriended by my own domestic spies,

The woof unwrought the suitor-train surprise.

From nuptial rites they now no more recede,

And fear forbids to falsify the breed.

My anxious parents urge a speedy choice,

180

And to their suffrage gain the filial voice:

For rule mature, Telemachus deplores

His dome dishonour'd, and exhausted stores —

But, stranger! as thy days seem full of fate,

Divide discourse, in turn thy birth relate

185

Thy port asserts thee of distinguish'd race;

No poor unfather'd product of disgrace.

Princess! he cries, renew'd by your command,

The dear remembrance of my native land,

Of secret grief unseals the fruitful source,

190

And tears repeat their long-forgotten course!

So pays the wretch, whom fate constrains to roam,

The dues of nature to his natal home! —

But inward on my soul let sorrow prey;

Your sov'reign will my duty bids obey.

195

Crete awes the circling waves, a fruitful soil!

And ninety cities crown the sea-born isle:

Mix'd with her genuine sons, adopted names

In various tongues avow their various claims:

Cydonians dreadful with the bended yew,

200

And bold Pelasgi boast a native's due:

The Dorians, plum'd amid the files of war,

Her foodful glebe with fierce Achaians share:

Cnossus, her capital of high command;

Where sceptred Minos with impartial hand

205

Divided right; each ninth revolving year,

By Jove receiv'd in council to confer,

His son Deucalion bore successive sway;

His son, who gave me first to view the day!

The royal bed an elder issue blest, 210
 Idomeneus, whom Ilian fields attest
 Of matchless deed : untrain'd to martial toil
 I liv'd inglorious in my native isle,
 Studious of peace ; and Æthon is my name.
 'Twas then to Crete the great Ulysses came ; 215
 For elemental war, and wintry Jove,
 From Malea's gusty cape his navy drove
 To bright Lucina's fane ; the shelvy coast
 Where loud Amnisus in the deep is lost.
 His vessels moor'd, (an incommodious port !), 220
 The hero speeded to the Cnossian court :
 Ardent the partner of his arms to find ;
 In leagues of long commutual friendship join'd.
 Vain hope ! ten suns had warm'd the western strand,
 Since my brave brother with his Cretan band 225
 Had sail'd for Troy : but to the genial feast
 My honour'd roof receiv'd the royal guest :
 Beeves for his train the Cnossian peers assign,
 A public treat, with jars of gen'rous wine.
 Twelve days, while Boreas vex'd th' aëreal space, 230
 My hospitable dome he deign'd to grace :
 And when the north had ceas'd the stormy roar,
 He wing'd his voyage to the Phrygian shore.
 Thus the fam'd hero, perfected in wiles,
 With fair similitude of truth beguiles 235
 The queen's attentive ear : dissolv'd in wo,
 From her bright eyes the tears unbounded flow.
 As snows collected on the mountain freeze ;
 When milder regions breathe a vernal breeze,
 The fleecy pile obeys the whisp'ring gales, 240
 Ends in a stream, and murmurs through the vales :
 So, melted with the pleasing tale he told,
 Down her fair cheek the copious torrent roll'd :
 She to her present lord laments him lost,
 And views that object which she wants the most ! 245
 With'ring at heart to see the weeping fair,
 His eyes look stern, and cast a gloomy stare ;

Of horn the stiff relentless balls appear,
Or globes of iron fix'd in either sphere;
Firm wisdom interdicts the soft'ning tear. }
A speechless interval of grief ensues, } 250
Till thus the queen the tender theme renews.

Stranger! that ere thy hospitable roof
Ulysses grac'd, confirm by faithful proof:
Delineate to my view my warlike lord, } 255
His form, his habit, and his train record.

'Tis hard, he cries, to bring to sudden sight
Ideas that have wing'd their distant flight:
Rare on the mind those images are trac'd,
Whose footsteps twenty winters have defac'd: } 260
But what I can, receive. — In ample mode,

A robe of military purple flow'd
O'er all his frame: illustrious on his breast,
The double clasping gold the king confest.
In the rich woof a hound, mosaic-drawn, } 265

Bore on full stretch, and seiz'd a dappled fawn:
Deep in the neck his fangs indent their hold;
They pant, and struggle in the moving gold.
Fine as a filmy web, beneath it shone
A vest, that dazzled like a cloudless sun: } 270

The female train who round him throng'd to gaze,
In silent wonder sigh'd unwilling praise.
A sabre, when the warrior press'd to part,
I gave, enamel'd with Vulcanian art:
A mantle purple-ting'd, and radiant vest, } 275
Dimension'd equal to his size, express
Affection grateful to my honour'd guest. }

A fav'rite herald in his train I knew,
His visage solemn sad, of sable hue:
Short woolly curls o'erflec'd his bending head, } 280
O'er which a promontory-shoulder spread:
Eurybates! in whose large soul alone
Ulysses view'd an image of his own.

His speech the tempest of her grief restor'd;
In all he told she recognis'd her lord: } 285
But when the storm was spent in plenteous show'rs,
A pause inspiring her languish'd pow'rs:

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O thou, she cry'd, whom first inclement fate
 Made welcome to my hospitable gate !
 With all thy wants the name of poor shall end ; 290
 Henceforth live honour'd, my domestic friend !
 The vest much envy'd on your native coast,
 And regal robe with figur'd gold embost,
 In happier hours my artful hand employ'd,
 When my lov'd lord this blisful bow'r enjoy'd : 295
 The fall of Troy, erroneous and forlorn,
 Doom'd to survive, and never to return !

Then he, with pity touch'd : O royal dame !
 Your ever-anxious mind, and beauteous frame,
 From the devouring rage of grief reclaim, 300
 I not the fondness of your soul reprove
 For such a lord ! who crown'd your virgin-love
 With the dear blessing of a fair increase ;
 Himself adorn'd with more than mortal grace :
 Yet while I speak, the mighty wo suspend ; 305
 Truth forms my tale ; to pleasing truth attend.
 The royal object of your dearest care
 Breathes in no distant clime the vital air :
 In rich Thesprotia, and the nearer bound
 Of Theffaly, his name I heard renown'd : 310
 Without retinue, to that friendly shore
 Welcom'd with gifts of price, a sumless store !
 His sacrilegious train, who dar'd to prey
 On herds devoted to the God of day,
 Were doom'd by Jove, and Phœbus' just decree, 315
 To perish in the rough Trinacrian sea.
 To better fate the blameless chief ordain'd,
 A floating fragment of the wreck regain'd,
 And rode the storm ; till by the billows tost,
 He landed on the fair Phæacian coast. 320
 That race, who emulate the life of Gods,
 Receive him joyous to their bless'd abodes :
 Large gifts confer, a ready sail command,
 To speed his voyage to the Grecian strand.
 But your wise lord, (in whose capacious soul 325
 High schemes of pow'r in just succession roll),

His

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His Ithaca refus'd from fav'ring fate,
Till copious wealth might guard his regal state.
Phedon the fact affirm'd, whose sov'reign sway
Thesprotian tribes, a duteous race, obey : 330
And bade the Gods this added truth attest,
(While pure libations crown'd the genial feast),
That anchor'd in his port the vessels stand,
To waft the hero to his natal land.

I for Dulichium urge the wat'ry way, 335
But first the Ulysean wealth survey :
So rich the value of a store so vast

Demands the pomp of centuries to waste !
The darling object of your royal love,
Was journey'd thence to Dodonean Jove ; 340
By the sure precept of the sylvan shrine,
To form the conduct of his great design :
Irresolute of soul, his state to shrowd

In dark disguise, or come a king avow'd ?
Thus lives your lord ; nor longer doom'd to roam, 345
Soon will he grace this dear paternal dome.

By Jove, the source of good, supreme in pow'r !
By the bless'd genius of this friendly bow'r !
I ratify my speech ; before the sun

His annual longitude of heav'n shall run ; 350
When the pale empress of yon starry train
In the next month renews her faded wane,
Ulysses will assert his rightful reign.

What thanks ! what boon ! (reply'd the queen), are due,
When time shall prove the storied blessing true ? 355

My lord's return should fate no more retard,
Envy shall sicken at thy vast reward.

But my prophetic fears, alas ! presage,
The wounds of destiny's relentless rage.

I long must weep ! nor will Ulysses come, 360
With royal gifts to send you honour'd home ! —

Your other task, ye menial train, forbear :
Now wash the stranger, and the bed prepare ;

With splendid palls the downy fleece adorn :
Up-rising early with the purple morn, 365

His

His sinews shrunk with age, and stiff with toil,
 In the warm bath foment with fragrant oil.
 Then with Telemachus the social feast
 Partaking free, my sole invited guest ;
 Whoe'er neglects to pay distinction due, 370
 The breach of hospitable right may rue.
 The vulgar of my sex I most exceed
 In real fame, when most humane my deed :
 And vainly to the praise of queen aspire,
 If, stranger ! I permit that mean attire, 375
 Beneath the feastful bow'r. A narrow space
 Confines the circle of our destin'd race ;
 'Tis ours, with good the scanty round to grace.
 Those who to cruel wrong their state abuse,
 Dreaded in life, the mutter'd curse pursues ; 380
 By death disrob'd of all their savage pow'rs,
 Then, licens'd rage her hateful prey devours.
 But he whose inborn worth his acts commend,
 Of gentle soul, to human race a friend ;
 The wretched he relieves diffuse his fame, 385
 And distant tongues extol the patron-name.

Princess, (he cry'd), in vain your bounties flow
 On me, confirm'd, and obstinate in wo.
 When my lov'd Crete receiv'd my final view,
 And from my weeping eyes her cliffs withdrew ; 390
 These tatter'd weeds (my decent robe resign'd)
 I chose, the liv'ry of a woful mind !
 Nor will my heart-corroding cares abate
 With splendid palls, and canopies of state :
 Low-couch'd on earth, the gift of sleep I scorn, 395
 And catch the glances of the waking morn.
 The delicacy of your courtly train
 To wash a wretched wand'rer would disdain ;
 But if, in track of long experience try'd,
 And sad similitude of woes ally'd, 400
 Some wretch reluctant views æreal light,
 To her mean hand assign the friendly rite.

Pleas'd with his wife reply, the queen rejoin'd :
 Such gentle manners, and so sage a mind,

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In all who grac'd this hospitable bow'r 405
I ne'er discern'd, before this social hour.

Such servant as your humble choice requires,
To light receiv'd the lord of my desires,
New from the birth; and with a mother's hand
His tender bloom to manly growth sustain'd : 410
Of matchless prudence, and a duteous mind ;
Though now to life's extremest verge declin'd,
Of strength superior to the toil assign'd. —

Rise, Euryclea ! with officious care
For the poor friend the cleansing bath prepare : 415

This debt his correspondent fortunes claim,
Too like Ulysses, and perhaps the same !
Thus old with woes my fancy paints him now !
For age untimely marks the careful brow.

Instant obsequious to the mild command, 420
Sad Euryclea rose : with trembling hand
She veils the torrent of her tearful eyes ;
And thus impassion'd to herself replies.

Son of my love, and monarch of my cares !
What pangs for thee this wretched bosom bears ! 425

Are thus by Jove who constant beg his aid
With pious deed, and pure devotion, paid ?
He never dar'd defraud the sacred fane,
Of perfect hecatombs in order slain :

There oft implor'd his tutelary pow'r, 430
Long to protract the sad sepulchral hour ;
That form'd for empire with paternal care,
His realm might recognise an equal heir.

O destin'd head ! The pious vows are lost ;
His God forgets him on a foreign coast ! — 435

Perhaps, like thee, poor guest ! in wanton pride
The rich insult him, and the young deride !
Conscious of worth revil'd, thy gen'rous mind
The friendly rite of purity declin'd ;

My will concurring with my queen's command, 440
Accept the bath from this obsequious hand.

A strong emotion shakes my anguish'd breast ;
In thy whole form Ulysses seems exprest :

OF

310 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book XIX.

Of all the wretched harbour'd on our coast,
None imag'd e'er like thee my master lost. 445

Thus half-discover'd thro' the dark disguise,
With cool composure feign'd, the chief replies.
You join your suffrage to the public vote;
The same you think, have all beholders thought.

He said: replenish'd from the purest springs, 450
The laver straight with busy care she brings:
In the deep vase, that shone like burnish'd gold,
The boiling fluid temperates the cold.

Meantime revolving in his thoughtful mind
The scar, with which his manly knee was sign'd; 455
His face averting from the crackling blaze,
His shoulders intercept th' unfriendly rays.

Thus cautious, in th' obscure he hop'd to fly
The curious search of Euryclea's eye.
Cautious in vain! nor ceas'd the dame to find 460
The scar, with which his manly knee was sign'd.

This on Parnassus (combating the boar)
With glancing rage the tusky savage tore.
Attended by his brave maternal race,
His grandsire sent him to the sylvan chace, 465

Autolycus the bold; (a mighty name
For spotless faith, and deeds of martial fame:
Hermes his patron-god those gifts bestow'd,
Whose shrine with weanling lambs he wont to load).

His course to Ithaca this hero sped, 470
When the first product of Laertes' bed
Was new disclos'd to birth: the banquet ends,
When Euryclea from the queen descends,
And to his fond embrace the babe commends. }

"Receive," she cries, "your royal daughter's son; 475

"And name the blessing that your pray'rs have won."

Then thus the hoary chief. "My victor arms

"Have aw'd the realms around with dire alarms:

"A sure memorial of my dreaded fame

"The boy shall bear; Ulysses be his name! 480

"And when with filial love the youth shall come }

"To view his mother's soil, my Delphic dome }

"With gifts of price shall send him joyous home." }
Lur'd

Book XIX. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 311

Lur'd with the promis'd boon, when youthful prime
 Ended in man, his mother's natal clime 485
 Ulysses fought; with fond affection dear
 Amphithea's arms receiv'd the royal heir:
 Her ancient * lord an equal joy posselt;
 Instant he bade prepare the genial feast:
 A steer to form the sumptuous banquet bled, 490
 Whose stately growth five flow'ry summers fed:
 His sons divide, and roast with artful care
 The limbs; then all the tasteful viands share.
 Nor ceas'd discourse (the banquet of the soul)
 Till Phœbus wheeling to the western goal 495 }
 Resign'd the skies, and night involv'd the pole.
 Their drooping eyes the slumb'rous shade oppress,
 Satated they rose, and all retir'd to rest.

Soon as the morn, new-rob'd in purple light,
 Pierc'd with her golden shafts the rear of night; 500
 Ulysses, and his brave maternal race
 The young Autolycci, assay the chace.
 Parnassus, thick perplex'd with horrid shades,
 With deep-mouth'd hounds the hunter-troop invades;
 What time the sun, from ocean's peaceful stream, 505
 Darts o'er the lawn his horizontal beam.
 The pack impatient snuff the tainted gale;
 The thorny wilds the wood-men fierce assail:
 And foremost of the train, his cornel spear
 Ulysses wav'd, to rouse the savage war. 510
 Deep in the rough recesses of the wood,
 A lofty copse, the growth of ages, stood:
 Nor winter's boreal blast, nor thund'rous show'r,
 Nor solar ray, could pierce the shady bow'r,
 With wither'd foliage strew'd, a heapy store! 515
 The warm pavilion of a dreadful boar.
 Rous'd by the hounds' and hunters' mingling cries,
 The savage from his leafy shelter flies:
 With fiery glare his sanguine eye-balls shine,
 And bristles high impale his horrid chine. 520

* Autolycus.

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Young Ithacus, advanc'd, defies the foe,
 Poising his lifted lance in act to throw :
 The savage renders vain the wound decreed,
 And springs impetuous with opponent speed !
 His tusks oblique he aim'd, the knee to gore ; 525
 Aslope they glanc'd, the sinewy fibres tore,
 And bar'd the bone : Ulysses undismay'd,
 Soon with redoubled force the wound repay'd ;
 To the right shoulder-joint the spear apply'd :
 His further flank with streaming purple dy'd : 530
 On earth he rush'd with agonizing pain ;
 With joy, and vast surprise, th' applauding train
 View'd his enormous bulk extended on the plain. }
 With bandage firm Ulysses' knee they bound ;
 Then chanting mystic lays, the closing wound 535
 Of sacred melody confess'd the force ;
 The tides of life regain'd their azure course.
 Then back they led the youth with loud acclaim.
 Autolycus, enamour'd with his fame,
 Confirm'd the cure : and from the Delphic dome 540
 With added gifts return'd him glorious home.
 He safe at Ithaca with joy receiv'd,
 Relates the chace, and early praise achiev'd.

Deep o'er his knee inseam'd, remain'd the scar :
 Which noted token of the woodland war 545
 When Euryclea found, th' ablution ceas'd ;
 Down dropp'd the leg, from her slack hand releas'd ;
 The mingled fluids from the vase redound ;
 The vase reclining floats the floor around !
 Smiles dew'd with tears the pleasing strife express 550
 Of grief, and joy, alternate in her breast.
 Her flut'ring words in melting murmurs dy'd ;
 At length abrupt—My son !—my king !—she cry'd.
 His neck with fond embrace infolding fast,
 Full on the queen her raptur'd eyes she cast, 555
 Ardent to speak the monarch safe restor'd ;
 But studious to conceal her royal lord,
 Minerva fix'd her mind on views remote,
 And from the present bliss abstracts her thought.

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His hand to Euryclea's mouth apply'd, 560

Art thou foredoom'd my pest? the hero cry'd:

Thy milky founts my infant lips have drain'd;

And have the fates thy babbling age ordain'd

To violate the life thy youth sustain'd?

An exile have I told, with weeping eyes,

Full twenty annual suns in distant skies:

At length return'd, some God inspires thy breast

To know thy king, and here I stand confess.

This heav'n-discover'd truth to thee consign'd,

Reserve, the treasure of thy inmost mind;

Else if the Gods my vengeful arm sustain,

And prostrate to my sword the suitor-train;

With their lewd mates, thy undistinguish'd age

Shall bleed a victim to vindictive rage.

Then thus rejoin'd the dame, devoid of fear. 575

What words, my son, have pass'd thy lips severe?

Deep in my soul the trust shall lodge secur'd;

With ribs of steel, and marble heart, immur'd.

When heav'n, auspicious to thy right avow'd,

Shall prostrate to thy sword the suitor-croud;

The deeds I'll blazon of the menial fair;

The lewd to death devote, the virtuous spare.

Thy aid avails me not, the chief reply'd;

My own experience shall their doom decide;

A witness-judge precludes a long appeal:

Suffice it thee thy monarch to conceal. 585

He said: obsequious with redoubled pace

She to the fount conveys th' exhausted vase:

The bath renew'd, she ends the pleasing toil

With plenteous unction of ambrosial oil. 590

Adjusting to his limbs the tatter'd vest,

His former seat receiv'd the stranger-guest;

Whom thus with pensive air the queen addrest.

Tho' night, dissolving grief in grateful ease,

Your drooping eyes with soft oppression seize;

A while, reluctant to her pleasing force,

Suspend the restless hour with sweet discourse.

The day (ne'er brighten'd with a beam of joy!)

My menials, and domestic cares employ:

† D d

And,

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And, unattended by sincere repose, 600
 The night afflicts my ever-wakeful woes :
 When nature's hush'd beneath her brooding shade,
 My echoing griefs the starry vault invade.
 As when the months are clad in flow'ry green,
 Sad Philomel, in bow'ry shades unseen, 605
 To vernal airs attunes her varied strains ;
 And Itylus sounds warbling o'er the plains :
 Young Itylus, his parents darling joy !
 Whom chance mislaid the mother to destroy :
 Now doom'd a wakeful bird to wail the beauteous boy. }
 So, in nocturnal solitude forlorn, 611
 A sad variety of woes I mourn !
 My mind reflective, in a thorny maze
 Devious, from care to care incessant strays.
 Now, wav'ring doubt succeeds to long despair ; 615
 Shall I my virgin nuptial vow revere ;
 And joining to my son's my menial train,
 Partake his councils, and assist his reign ?
 Or, since mature in manhood, he deploras
 His dome dishonour'd, and exhausted stores ; 620
 Shall I, reluctant ! to his will accord ;
 And from the peers select the noblest lord ;
 So by my choice avow'd, at length decide
 These wasteful love-debates, a mourning bride ?
 A visionary thought I'll now relate, 625
 Illustrate, if you know, the shadow'd fate.
 A team of twenty geese, (a snow-white train !),
 Fed near the limpid lake with golden grain,
 Amuse my pensive hours. The bird of Jove
 Pierce from his mountain-eyrie downward drove ; 630
 Each fav'rite fowl he pounc'd with deathful sway,
 And back triumphant wing'd his airy way.
 My pitying eyes effus'd a plenteous stream,
 To view their death thus imag'd in a dream :
 With tender sympathy to sooth my soul, 635
 A troop of matrons, fancy-form'd, condole.
 But whilst with grief and rage my bosom burn'd,
 Sudden the tyrant of the skies return'd :

Perch'd

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Perch'd on the battlements he thus began,
(In form an eagle, but in voice a man). 640

O queen ! no vulgar vision of the sky
I come, prophetic of approaching joy :
View in this plummy form thy victor lord ;
The geese (a glutton race) by thee deplor'd,
Portend the suitors fated to my sword. 645 }

This said, the pleasing feather'd omen ceas'd,
When from the downy bands of sleep releas'd,
Fast by the limpid lake my swan-like train
I found, insatiate of the golden grain.

The vision self-explain'd (the chief replies) 650
Sincere reveals the sanction of the skies :
Ulysses speaks his own return decreed,
And by his sword the suitors sure to bleed.

Hard is the task, and rare, (the queen rejoin'd),
Impending destinies in dreams to find : 655
Immur'd within the silent bow'r of sleep,

Two portals firm the various phantoms keep :
Of iv'ry one ; whence flit to mock the brain,
Of winged lies a light fantastic train :
The gate oppos'd pellucid valves adorn, 660
And columns fair incas'd with polish'd horn ;
Where images of truth for passage wait,
With visions manifest of future fate.

Not to this troop, I fear, that phantom soar'd,
Which spoke Ulysses to his realm restor'd ; 665
Delusive semblance ! — But my remnant life
Heav'n shall determine in a gameful strife :
With that fam'd bow Ulysses taught to bend,
For me the rival archers shall contend.

As on the list'd field he us'd to place 670
Six beams, oppos'd to six in equal space ;
Elanc'd afar by his unnerring art,
Sure thro' six circlets flew the whizzing dart.

So, when the sun restores the purple day,
Their strength and skill the suitors shall assay : 675
To him the spousal honour is decreed,
Who thro' the rings directs the feather'd reed.

Torn from these walls (where long the kinder pow'rs
 With pomp and joy have wing'd my youthful hours!)
 On this poor breast no dawn of bliss shall beam; 680
 The pleasure past supplies a copious theme
 For many a dreary thought, and many a doleful dream!

Propose the sportive lot, (the chief replies),
 Nor dread to name yourself the bowyer's prize.
 Ulysses will surprize th' unfinish'd game 685
 Avow'd, and falsify the suitors' claim.

To whom with grace serene the queen rejoin'd,
 In all thy speech what pleasing force I find!
 O'er my suspended wo thy words prevail,
 I part reluctant from the pleasing tale. 690
 But heav'n, that knows what all terrestrials need,
 Repose to night, and toil to day decreed:
 Grateful vicissitude! yet me withdrawn,
 Wakeful to weep and watch the tardy dawn
 Establish'd use enjoins; to rest and joy 695
 Estrang'd, since dear Ulysses sail'd to Troy!
 Meantime instructed is the menial tribe
 Your couch to fashion as yourself prescribe.

Thus affable, her bow'r the queen ascends;
 The sov'reign step a beauteous train attends; 700
 There imag'd to her soul Ulysses rose;
 Down her pale cheek new-streaming sorrow flows:
 Till soft oblivious shade Minerva spread,
 And o'er her eyes ambrosial slumber shed.

THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK XX.

THE ARGUMENT.

While Ulysses lies in the vestibule of the palace, he is witness to the disorders of the women. Minerva comforts him, and casts him asleep. At his awaking he desires a favourable sign from Jupiter, which is granted. The feast of Apollo is celebrated by the people, and the suitors banquet in the palace. Telemachus exerts his authority amongst them; notwithstanding which, Ulysses is insulted by Ctesippus, and the rest continue in their excesses. Strange prodigies are seen by Theoclymenus the augur, who explains them to the destruction of the wooers.

AN ample hide divine Ulysses spread,
And form'd of fleecy skins his humble bed;
(The remnants of the spoil the suitor-croud
In festival devour'd, and victims vow'd).
Then o'er the chief, Eurynomè the chaste
With duteous care a downy carpet cast :
With dire revenge his thoughtful bosom glows,
And ruminating wrath, he scorns repose.
As thus pavilion'd in the porch he lay,
Scenes of lewd loves his wakeful eyes survey, 10
Whilst to nocturnal joys impure, repair
With wanton glee, the prostituted fair.
His heart with rage this new dishonour stung,
Wav'ring his thoughts in dubious balance hung ;
D d 3. Or,

Or, instant should he quench the guilty flame. 15
 With their own blood, and intercept the shame ;
 Or to their lust indulge a last embrace,
 And let the peers consummate the disgrace ;
 Round his swol'n heart the murmur'ous fury rolls ;
 As o'er her young the mother-mastiff growls, 20
 And bays the stranger-groom : so wrath compress'd
 Recoiling, mutter'd thunder in his breast.
 Poor suffer'ing heart ! (he cry'd), support the pain
 Of wounded honour, and thy rage restrain.
 Not fiercer woes thy fortitude could foil, 25
 When the brave partners of thy ten years-toil
 Dire Polypheme devour'd : I then was freed,
 By patient prudence, from the death decreed.

Thus anchor'd safe on reason's peaceful coast,
 Tempests of wrath his soul no longer tost ; 30
 Restless his body rolls, to rage resign'd :
 As one who long with pale-ey'd famine pin'd,
 The sav'ry cates on glowing embers cast
 Incessant turns, impatient for repast :
 Ulysses so, from side to side devolv'd, 35
 In self-debate the suitors doom resolv'd.
 When in the form of mortal nymph array'd,
 From heav'n descends the Jove-born martial maid ;
 And hov'ring o'er his head in view confess'd,
 The Goddess thus her fav'rite care address'd. 40

Oh thou, of mortals most inur'd to woes !
 Why roll those eyes unfriended of repose ?
 Beneath thy palace-roof forget thy care ;
 Bless'd in thy queen ! bless'd in thy blooming heir !
 Whom, to the Gods when suppliant fathers bow, 45
 They name the standard of their dearest vow.

Just is thy kind reproach, (the chief rejoin'd) ;
 Deeds full of fate distract my various mind,
 In contemplation wrapt. This hostile crew
 What single arm hath prowess to subdue ? 50
 Or if by Jove's and thy auxiliar aid
 They're doom'd to bleed ; O say, celestial maid !
 Where shall Ulysses shun, or how sustain,
 Nations embattled to revenge the slain ?

Oh impotence of faith ! (Minerva cries) : 55
 If man on frail unknowing man relies,
 Doubt you the Gods ? Lo Pallas' self descends,
 Inspires thy counsels, and thy toils attends.
 In me affianc'd, fortify thy breast,
 Though myriads leagu'd thy rightful claim contest : 60
 My sure divinity shall bear the shield,
 And edge thy sword to reap the glorious field.
 Now pay the debt to craving nature due,
 Her faded pow'rs with balmy rest renew.
 She ceas'd : ambrosial slumbers seal his eyes ; 65
 His care dissolves in visionary joys :
 The Goddess, pleas'd, regains her natal skies.
 Not so the queen ; the downy bands of sleep
 By grief relax'd, she wak'd again to weep :
 A gloomy pause ensu'd of dumb despair ; 70
 Then thus her fate invok'd, with fervent pray'r.
 Diana ! speed thy deathful ebon dart,
 And cure the pangs of this convulsive heart.
 Snatch me, ye whirlwinds ! far from human race,
 Toss'd through the void illimitable space : 75
 Or if dismounted from the rapid cloud,
 Me with his whelming wave let ocean shroud !
 So, Pandarus, thy hopes, three orphan fair
 Were doom'd to wander through the devious air ;
 Thyself untimely and thy consort dy'd, 80
 But four celestials both your cares supply'd.
 Venus in tender delicay rears
 With honey, milk, and wine, their infant years ;
 Imperial Juno to their youth assign'd
 A form majestic, and sagacious mind ; 85
 With shapely growth Diana grac'd the bloom,
 And Pallas taught the texture of the loom.
 But whilst, to learn their lots in nuptial love,
 Bright Cytherea fought the bow'r of Jove ;
 (The God supreme, to whose eternal eye 90
 The registers of fate expanded lie) ;
 Wing'd Harpies snatch'd th' unguarded charge away,
 And to the furies bore a grateful prey.

Be such my lot ! or thou Diana speed
 Thy shaft, and send me joyful to the dead, 95
 To seek my lord among the warrior-train,
 Ere second vows my bridal faith profane,
 When woes the waking sense alone assail,
 Whilst night extends her soft oblivious veil,
 Of other wretches care the torture ends : 100
 No truce the warfare of my heart suspends !
 The night renews the day-distracting theme,
 And airy terrors fable ev'ry dream.
 The last alone a kind illusion wrought,
 And to my bed my lov'd Ulysses brought, 105
 In manly bloom, and each majestic grace,
 As when for Troy he left my fond embrace :
 Such raptures in my beating bosom rise,
 I deem it sure a vision of the skies.

Thus, whilst Aurora mounts her purple throne, 110
 In audible laments she breathes her moan ;
 The sounds assault Ulysses' wakeful ear ;
 Mis-judging of the cause, a sudden fear
 Of his arrival known, the chief alarms ;
 He thinks the queen is rushing to his arms. 115
 Upspringing from his couch, with active haste
 The fleece and carpet in the dome he plac'd ;
 (The hide, without, imbib'd the morning-air),
 And thus the Gods invok'd, with ardent pray'r.

Jove, and æthereal thrones ! with heav'n to friend,
 If the long series of my woes shall end ; 121
 Of human race now rising from repose,
 Let one a blissful omen here disclose ;
 And to confirm my faith, propitious Jove !
 Vouchsafe the sanction of a sign above. 125

Whilst lowly thus the chief adoring bows,
 The pitying God his guardian aid avows.
 Loud from a sapphire sky his thunder sounds :
 With springing hope the hero's heart rebounds.
 Soon, with consummate joy to crown his pray'r, 130
 An omen'd voice invades his ravish'd ear.
 Beneath a pile that close the dome adjoin'd,
 Twelve female slaves the gift of Ceres grind ;

Task'd

Task'd for the royal board to bolt the bran
 From the pure flour, (the growth and strength of man);
 Discharging to the day the labour due, 136
 Now early to repose the rest withdrew;
 One maid, unequal to the task assign'd,
 Still turn'd the toilsome mill with anxious mind;
 And thus in bitterness of soul divin'd. 140 }

Father of Gods and men! whose thunders roll
 O'er the ærean vault, and shake the pole;
 Whoe'er from heav'n has gain'd this rare ostent,
 (Of granted vows a certain signal sent),
 In this blest moment of accepted pray'r, 145
 Piteous, regard a wretch consum'd with care!
 Instant, O Jove! confound the suitor-train,
 For whom o'er-toil'd I grind the golden grain:
 Far from this dome the lewd devourers cast;
 And be this festival decreed their last! 150

Big with their doom denounc'd in earth and sky,
 Ulysses' heart dilates with secret joy.
 Meantime the menial train with unctuous wood
 Heap'd high the genial hearth, Vulcanian food:
 When, early dress'd, advanc'd the royal heir; 155
 With manly grasp he wav'd a martial spear,
 A radiant sabre grac'd his purple zone,
 And on his foot the golden sandal thone.
 His steps impetuous to the portal press'd;
 And Euryclea thus he there address'd. 160

Say thou, to whom my youth its nurture owes,
 Was care for due refection, and repose,
 Bestow'd the stranger-guest? or waits he griev'd,
 His age not honour'd, nor his wants reliev'd?
 Promiscuous grace on all the queen confers; 165
 (In woes bewilder'd, oft the wisest errs.)
 The wordy vagrant to the dole aspires,
 And modest worth with noble scorn retires.

She thus: O cease that ever-honour'd name
 To blemish now; it ill deserves your blame. 170
 A bowl of gen'rous wine suffic'd the guest;
 In vain the queen the night-refection prest;

Not

Nor would he court repose in downy state,
 Unblest'd, abandon'd to the rage of fate !
 A hide beneath the portico was spread, 175
 And fleecy skins compos'd an humble bed :
 A downy carpet cast with duteous care,
 Secur'd him from the keen nocturnal air.

His cornel jav'lin pois'd, with regal port,
 To the sage Greeks conven'd in Themis' court, 180
 Forth-issuing from the dome, the prince repair'd :
 Two dogs of chace, a lion-hearted guard,
 Behind him sourly stalk'd. Without delay
 The dame divides the labour of the day ;
 Thus urging to the toil the menial train. 185
 What marks of luxury the marble stain !
 Its wonted lustre let the floor regain ;
 The seats with purple clothe in order due ;
 And let th' abstersive sponge the board renew :
 Let some refresh the vase's sullied mold ; 190
 Some bid the goblets boast their native gold :
 Some to the spring, with each a jar, repair,
 And copious waters pure for bathing bear :
 Dispatch ! for soon the suitors will assay
 The lunar feast rites to the God of day. 195

She said ; with duteous haste a bevy fair
 Of twenty virgins to the spring repair :
 With varied toils the rest adorn the dome.
 Magnificent, and blithe, the suitors come.
 Some wield the sounding axe ; the dodder'd oaks 200
 Divide, obedient to the forceful strokes.
 Soon from the fount, with each a brimming urn,
 (Eumæus in their train), the maids return.
 Three porkers for the feast, all brawny-chin'd,
 He brought ; the choicest of the tusky kind : 205
 In lodgments first secure his care he view'd,
 Then to the king this friendly speech renew'd :
 Now say sincere, my guest ! the suitor-train
 Still treat they worth with lordly dull disdain ;
 Or speaks their deed a bounteous mind humane ? 210

Some pitying God (Ulysses sad reply'd)
 With vollied vengeance blast their tow'ring pride !

No conscious blush, no sense of right restrains
 The tides of lust that swell their boiling veins :
 From vice to vice their appetites are tost, 215
 All cheaply sated at another's cost !

While thus the chief his woes indignant told,
 Melanthius, master of the bearded fold,
 The goodliest goats of all the royal herd
 Spontaneous to the suitors' feast preferr'd : 220
 Two grooms assistant bore the victims bound ;
 With quav'ring cries the vaulted roofs resound :
 And to the chief austere, aloud began
 The wretch unfriendly to the race of man.

Here, vagrant, still ? offensive to my lords ! 225
 Blows have more energy than airy words ;
 These arguments I'll use : nor conscious shame,
 Nor threats, thy bold intrusion will reclaim.
 On this high feast the meanest vulgar boast
 A plenteous board ! Hence ! seek another host ! 230

Rejoinder to the churl the king disdain'd,
 But shook his head, and rising wrath restrain'd.

From Cephalenia cross the surgy main
 Philætiæ late arriv'd, a faithful swain.
 A steer ungrateful to the bull's embrace, 235
 And goats he brought, the pride of all their race ;
 Imported in a shallop not his own :
 The dome re-echo'd to their mingled moan.
 Straight to the guardian of the bristly kind
 He thus began, benevolent of mind. 240

What guest is he, of such majestic air ?
 His lineage and paternal clime declare :
 Dim through th' eclipse of fate, the rays divine
 Of sov'reign state with faded splendour shine.
 If monarchs by the Gods are plung'd in wo, 245
 To what abyss are we foredoom'd to go !
 Then affable he thus the chief address'd,
 Whilst with pathetic warmth his hand he press'd.

Stranger ! may fate a milder aspect shew,
 And spin thy future with a whiter clue ! 250
 O Jove ! for ever deaf to human cries,
 The tyrant, not the father of the skies !

Unpiteous

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Unpiteous of the race thy will began !
 The fool of fate, thy manufacture, man,
 With penury, contempt, repulse, and care, 255
 The galling load of life is doom'd to bear.
 Ulysses from his state a wand'rer still,
 Upbraids thy pow'r, thy wisdom, or thy will :
 O monarch ever dear ! — O man of wo ! —
 Fresh flow my tears, and shall for ever flow ! 260
 Like thee, poor stranger-guest, deny'd his home !
 Like thee, in rags obscene decreed to roam !
 Or haply perish'd on some distant coast,
 In Stygian gloom he glides a pensive ghost !
 O, grateful for the good his bounty gave, 265
 I'll grieve, till sorrow sink me to the grave !
 His kind protecting hand my youth preferr'd,
 The regent of his Cephallenian herd :
 With vast increase beneath my care it spreads,
 A stately breed ! and blackens far the meads. 270
 Constrain'd, the choicest beeves I thence import,
 To cram these cormorants that croud his court :
 Who in partition seek his realm to share ;
 Nor human right, nor wrath divine revere.
 Since here resolv'd oppressive these reside, 275
 Contending doubts my anxious heart divide :
 Now to some foreign clime inclin'd to fly,
 And with the royal herd protection buy :
 Then, happier thoughts return the nodding scale,
 Light mounts despair, alternate hopes prevail : 280
 In op'ning prospects of ideal joy,
 My king returns ; the proud usurpers die.
 To whom the chief : In thy capacious mind
 Since daring zeal with cool debate is join'd ;
 Attend a deed already ripe in fate : 285
 Attest, Oh Jove ! the truth I now relate !
 This sacred truth attest each genial pow'r,
 Who blest the board, and guard this friendly bow'r !
 Before thou quit the dome (nor long delay)
 Thy wish produc'd in act, with pleas'd survey, 290
 Thy

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Thy wond'ring eyes shall view : his rightful reign
By arms avow'd Ulysses shall regain,
And to the shades devote the suitor-train.

O Jove supreme ! (the raptur'd swain replies),
With deeds consummate soon the promis'd joys ! 295
These aged nerves, with new-born vigour strung,
In that blest'd cause should emulate the young——
Assents Eumæus to the pray'r address ;
And equal ardours fire his loyal breast.

Meantime the suitors urge the prince's fate, 300
And deathful arts employ the dire debate :
When in his airy tour, the bird of Jove
Truss'd with his sinewy pounce a trembling dove ;
Sinister to their hope ! This omen ey'd
Amphinomus, who thus presaging cry'd. 305

The Gods from force and fraud the prince defend ;
O peers ! the sanguinary scheme suspend :
Your future thought let fable fate employ ;
And give the present hour to genial joy.

From council straight th' assenting peerage ceast, 310
And in the dome prepar'd the genial feast.

Disrob'd, their vests apart in order lay,
Then all with speed succinct the victims slay :
With sheep and shaggy goats the porkers bled,
And the proud steer was on the marble spread. 315
With fire prepar'd they deal the morsels round,
Wine rosy bright the brimming goblets crown'd,
By sage Eumæus borne : the purple tide
Melanthius from an ample jar supply'd :
High canisters of bread Philætius plac'd ; 320
And eager all devour the rich repast.

Dispos'd apart, Ulysses shares the treat !
A trivet table, and ignobler seat,
The prince appoints ; but to his fire assigns
The tasteful inwards, and nectareous wines. 325

Partake, my guest, (he cry'd), without control
The social feast, and drain the cheering bowl :
Dread not the railer's laugh, nor ruffian's rage ;
No vulgar roof protects thy honour'd age ;

† E e

This

This dome a refuge to thy wrongs shall be, 330
 From my great fire too soon devolv'd to me !
 Your violence and scorn, ye suitors, cease,
 Left arms avenge the violated peace.

Aw'd by the prince, so haughty, brave, and young,
 Rage gnaw'd the lip, amazement chain'd the tongue.
 Be patient, peers ! (at length Antinous cries) ; 336
 The threats of vain imperious youth despise :
 Would Jove permit the meditated blow,
 That stream of eloquence should cease to flow.

Without reply vouchsaf'd, Antinous ceas'd : 340
 Meanwhile the pomp of festival increas'd :
 By heralds rank'd, in marshall'd order move
 The city-tribes, to pleas'd Apollo's grove :
 Beneath the verdure of which awful shade, 345 }
 The lunar hecatomb they grateful laid ;
 Partook the sacred feast, and ritual honours paid.
 But the rich banquet in the dome prepar'd,
 (An humble side-board set), Ulysses shar'd.
 Observant of the prince's high behest,
 His menial train attend the stranger-guest : 350
 Whom Pallas with unpar'd'ning fury fir'd,
 By lordly pride and keen reproach inspir'd.
 A Samian peer, more studious than the rest
 Of vice, who teem'd with many a dead-born jest ;
 And urg'd, for title to a consort queen, 355
 Unnumber'd acres, arable and green ;
 (Ctesippus nam'd) ; this lord Ulysses ey'd,
 And thus burst out, imposthumate with pride.

The sentence I propose, ye peers, attend :
 Since due regard must wait the prince's friend, 360
 Let each a token of esteem bestow :
 This gift acquits the dear respect I owe ;
 With which he nobly may discharge his seat,
 And pay the menials for the master's treat.

He said ; and of the steer before him plac'd, 365
 That sinewy fragment at Ulysses cast,
 Where to the pattern-bone, by nerves combin'd,
 The well-horn'd foot indissolubly join'd ;
 Which whizzing high, the wall unseemly sign'd.

The

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The chief, indignant, grins a ghastly smile ; 370
 Revenge and scorn within his bosom boil :
 When thus the prince, with pious rage inflam'd :
 Had not th' inglorious wound thy malice aim'd
 Fall'n guiltless of the mark, my certain spear
 Had made thee buy the brutal triumph dear : 375
 Nor should thy sire, a queen his daughter boast ;
 The suitor, now, had vanish'd in a ghost :
 No more, ye lewd compeers, with lawless pow'r
 Invade my dome, my herds and flocks devour :
 For genuine worth, of age mature to know, 380
 My grape shall redden, and my harvest grow.
 Or if each other's wrongs ye still support,
 With rapes and riot to profane my court ;
 What single arm with numbers can contend?
 On me let all your lifted swords descend, 385
 And with my life such vile dishonours end.

A long cessation of discourse ensu'd,
 By gentler Agelaus thus renew'd :
 A just reproof, ye peers ! your rage restrain
 From the protected guest, and menial train : 390
 And, prince ! to stop the source of future ill,
 Assent yourself, and gain the royal will.
 Whilst hope prevail'd to see your sire restor'd,
 Of right the queen refus'd a second lord.
 But who so vain of faith, so blind to fate, 395
 To think he still survives to claim the state ?
 Now press the sov'reign dame with warm desire
 To wed, as wealth or worth her choice inspire :
 The lord selected to the nuptial joys,
 Far hence will lead the long-contended prize : 400
 Whilst in paternal pomp, with plenty bless'd,
 You reign, of this imperial dome possess'd.

Sage and serene Telemachus replies :
 By him at whose behest the thunder flies !
 And by the name on earth I most revere, 405
 By great Ulysses, and his woes I swear !
 (Who never must review his dear domain ;
 Inroll'd, perhaps, in Pluto's dreary train) ;

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Whene'er her choice the royal dame avows,
My bridal gifts shall load the future spouse : 410
But from this dome my parent-queen to chase !—
From me, ye Gods ! avert such dire disgrace.

But Pallas' clouds with intellectual gloom
The suitors' souls, insensate of their doom !
A mirthful frenzy seiz'd the fated croud ; 415
The roofs resound with causeless laughter loud :
Floating in gore, portentous to survey !
In each discolour'd vase the viands lay :
Then down each cheek the tears spontaneous flow,
And sudden sighs precede approaching wo. 420
In vision rapt, the * Hypereſian ſeer
Uproſe, and thus divin'd the vengeance near.

O race to death devote ! with Stygian ſhade
Each deſtin'd peer impending fates invade :
With tears your wan diſtorted cheeks are drown'd ; 425
With ſanguine drops the walls are rubied round :
Thick ſwarms the ſpacious hall with howling ghosſts,
To people Orcus, and the burning coaſts !
Nor gives the ſun his golden orb to roll,
But univerſal night uſurps the pole ! 430

Yet warn'd in vain, with laughter loud elate
The peers reproach the ſure divine of fate ;
And thus Eurymachus : The dotard's mind
To ev'ry ſenſe is loſt, to reaſon blind :
Swift from the dome conſult the ſlave away ; 435
Let him in open air behold the day.

Tax not, (the heav'n-illumin'd ſeer rejoin'd),
Of rage, or folly, my prophetic mind.
No clouds of error dim th' æthereal rays,
Her equal pow'r each faithful ſenſe obeys. 440
Unguided hence my trembling ſteps I bend,
Far hence, before yon hov'ring deaths deſcend ;
Leſt, the ripe harveſt of revenge begun,
I ſhare the doom ye ſuitors cannot ſhun.

This ſaid, to ſage Piræus ſped the ſeer, 445
His honour'd hoſt, a welcome inmate there.

* Theoclymenus.

O'er the protracted feast the suitors sit,
 And aim to wound the prince with pointleſs wit :
 Cries one, with ſcornful leer and mimic voice,
 Thy charity we praife, but not thy choice ; 450
 Why ſuch profuſion of indulgence ſhown
 To this poor, tim'rous, toil-detefting drone ?
 That other feeds on planetary ſchemes,
 And pays his hoſt with hideous noon-day dreams.
 But, prince ! for once at leaſt believe a friend, 455
 To ſome Sicilian mart theſe courtiers ſend,
 Where, if they yield their freight acroſs the main,
 Dear ſell the ſlaves ! demand no greater gain.

Thus jovial they ; but nought the prince replies ;
 Full on his ſire he roll'd his ardent eyes ; 460
 Impatient ſtraight to ſheath his virgin-ſword ;
 From the wiſe chief he waits the deathful word.
 Nigh in her bright alcove, the penſive queen
 To ſee the circle ſat, of all unſeen.
 Sated at length they riſe, and bid prepare 465
 An eve-repaſt, with equal coſt and care :
 But vengeful Pallas, with preventing ſpeed,
 A feaſt proportion'd to their crimes decreed ;
 A feaſt of death ! the feaſters doom'd to bleed !

T H E
O D Y S S E Y.

B O O K XXI.

T H E A R G U M E N T.

The bending of Ulysses's bow.

Penelope, to put an end to the solicitation of the suitors, proposes to marry the person who shall first bend the bow of Ulysses, and shoot through the ringlets. After their attempts have proved ineffectual, Ulysses, taking Eumæus and Philætius apart, discovers himself to them; then returning, desires leave to try his strength at the bow, which though refused with indignation by the suitors, Penelope and Telemachus cause it to be delivered to his hands. He bends it immediately, and shoots through all the rings. Jupiter in the same instant thunders from heaven; Ulysses accepts the omen, and gives a sign to Telemachus, who stands ready armed at his side.

AND Pallas now, to raise the rivals fires,
With her own art Penelope inspires :
Who now can bend Ulysses' bow, and wing
The well-aim'd arrow through the distant ring,
Shall end the strife, and win th' imperial dame ;

But discord and black death await the game !
The prudent queen the lofty stair ascends,
At distance due a virgin-train attends ;
A brazen key she held, the handle turn'd,
With steel and polish'd elephant adorn'd :

Swift to the inmost room she bent her way,
 Where safe repos'd the royal treasures lay;
 There shone high heap'd the labour'd brass and ore,
 And there the bow which great Ulysses bore,
 And there the quiver, where now guiltless slept 15
 Those winged deaths that many a matron wept.

This gift, long since when Sparta's shores he trod,
 On young Ulysses Iphitus bestow'd:
 Beneath Orsilochnus's roof they met;
 One loss was private, one a public debt: 20
 Messena's state from Ithaca detains
 Three hundred sheep, and all the shepherd swains:
 And to the youthful prince to urge the laws,
 The king and elders trust their common cause.
 But Iphitus, employ'd on other cares, 25
 Search'd the wide country for his wand'ring mares,
 And mules, the strongest of the lab'ring kind;
 Hapless to search! more hapless still to find!
 For journeying on to Hercules at length,
 That lawless wretch, that man of brutal strength, 30
 Deaf to heav'n's voice, the social rite transgress;
 And for the beauteous mares destroy'd his guest.
 He gave the bow; and on Ulysses' part
 Receiv'd a pointed sword and missile dart:
 Of luckless friendship on a foreign shore 35
 Their first, last pledges! for they met no more.
 The bow, bequeath'd by this unhappy hand,
 Ulysses bore not from his native land;
 Nor in the front of battle taught to bend,
 But kept, in dear memorial of his friend. 40

Now gently winding up the fair ascent,
 By many an easy step, the matron went;
 Then o'er the pavements glides with grace divine,
 (With polish'd oak the level pavements shine);
 The folding gates a dazzling light display'd, 45
 With pomp of various architrave o'erlaid.
 The bolt, obedient to the silken string,
 Forsakes the staple as she pulls the ring;
 The wards respondent to the key turn round;
 The bars fall back; the flying valves resound; 50

Loud

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Loud as a bull makes hill and valley ring,
 So roar'd the lock when it releas'd the spring.
 She moves majestic through the wealthy room,
 Where treasur'd garments cast a rich perfume :
 There from the column where aloft it hung, 55
 Reach'd, in its splendid case, the bow unstring :
 Across her knees she laid the well known bow,
 And pensive sat, and tears began to flow.
 To full satiety of grief she mourns ;
 Then silent, to the joyous hall returns, 60
 To the proud suitors bears in pensive state
 Th' unbended bow, and arrows wing'd with fate.

Behind, her train the polish'd coffer brings,
 Which held th' alternate brags and silver rings,
 Full in the portal the chaste queen appears, 65
 And with her veil conceals the coming tears :
 On either side awaits a virgin fair ;
 While thus the matron, with majestic air.

Say you, whom these forbidden walls inclose,
 For whom my victims bleed, my vintage flows ; 70
 If these neglected, faded charms can move ?
 Or is it but a vain pretence, you love ?
 If I the prize, if me you seek to wife,
 Hear the conditions, and commence the strife.
 Who first Ulysses' wondrous bow shall bend, 75
 And through twelve ringlets the fleet arrow send,
 Him will I follow, and forsake my home,
 For him forsake this lov'd, this wealthy dome,
 Long, long the scene of all my past delight,
 And still to last, the vision of my night ! 80

Graceful she said, and bade Eumæus show
 The rival peers the ringlets and the bow.
 From his full eyes the tears unbidden spring,
 Touch'd at the dear memorials of his king.
 Philætiæ too relents, but secret shed 85
 The tender drops. Antinous saw, and said.

Hence to your fields, ye rustics ! hence away,
 Nor stain with grief the pleasures of the day ;
 Nor to the royal heart recall in vain
 The sad remembrance of a perish'd man. 90

Enough

Enough her precious tears already flow —
 Or share the feast with due respect, or go
 To weep abroad, and leave to us the bow :
 No vulgar task ! Ill suits this courtly crew
 That stubborn horn which brave Ulysses drew. 95
 I well remember (for I gaz'd him o'er
 While yet a child) what majesty he bore !
 And still (all infant as I was) retain
 The port, the strength, the grandeur of the man.

He said, but in his soul fond joys arise, 100
 And his proud hopes already win the prize.
 To speed the flying shaft through ev'ry ring,
 Wretch ! is not thine ! the arrows of the king
 Shall end those hopes, and fate is on the wing !

Then thus Telemachus : Some God I find 105
 With pleasing frenzy has possess'd my mind ;
 When a lov'd mother threatens to depart,
 Why with this ill-tim'd gladness leaps my heart ?
 Come then, ye suitors ! and dispute a prize

Richer than all th' Achaian state supplies, 110
 Than all proud Argos, or Mycæna knows,
 Than all our isles or continents inclose :
 A woman matchless, and almost divine,
 Fit for the praise of ev'ry tongue but mine.

No more excuses then, no more delay ; 115
 Haste to the trial——Lo ! I lead the way.
 I too may try, and if this arm can wing
 The feather'd arrow through the destin'd ring,
 Then if no happier knight the conquest boast,
 I shall not sorrow for a mother lost ; 120

But blest'd in her, possess these arms alone,
 Heir of my father's strength, as well as throne.

He spoke ; then rising, his broad sword unbound,
 And cast his purple garment on the ground.

A trench he open'd ; in a line he plac'd 125
 The level axes, and the points made fast.

(His perfect skill the wond'ring gazers ey'd,
 The game as yet unseen, as yet untry'd).

Then, with a manly pace, he took his stand ;
 And grasp'd the bow, and twang'd it in his hand. 130

Three

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Three times, with beating heart, he made essay ;
 Three times, unequal to the task, gave way :
 A modest boldness on his cheek appear'd :
 And thrice he hop'd, and thrice again he fear'd.
 The fourth had drawn it. The great fire with joy
 Beheld, but with a sign forbade the boy. 136
 His ardour straight th' obedient prince suppress'd,
 And artful, thus the suitor-train address'd.

Oh lay the cause on youth yet immature !
 (For heav'n forbid, such weakness should endure). 140
 How shall this arm, unequal to the bow,
 Retort an insult, or repel a foe ?
 But you ! whom heav'n with better nerves has blest,
 Accept the trial, and the prize contest.

He cast the bow before him, and apart 145
 Against the polish'd quiver propt the dart.
 Resuming then his seat, Epitheus' son,
 The bold Antinous, to the rest begun.

" From where the goblet first begins to flow ;
 " From right to left, in order take the bow ; 150
 " And prove your sev'ral strengths." — The princes
 heard ;

And first Leiodes, blameless priest, appear'd ;
 The eldest born of Oenops' noble race,
 Who next the goblet held his holy place :
 He, only he, of all the suitor-throng, 155
 Their deeds detested, and abjur'd the wrong.
 With tender hands the stubborn horn he strains,
 The stubborn horn resisted all his pains !

Already in despair he gives it o'er :
 Take it who will, (he cries), I strive no more. 160
 What num'rous deaths attend this fatal bow ?
 What souls and spirits shall it send below ?

Better indeed to die, and fairly give
 Nature her debt, than disappointed live,
 With each new sun to some new hope a prey, 165
 Yet still to-morrow falser than to-day.
 How long in vain Penelope we sought ?
 This bow shall ease us of that idle thought,

And

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And send us with some humbler wife to live,
Whom gold shall gain, or destiny shall give. 170

Thus speaking, on the floor the bow he plac'd,
(With rich inlay the various floor was grac'd) ;
At distance far the feather'd shaft he throws,
And to the seat returns from whence he rose.

To him Antinous thus with fury said. 175

What words ill-omen'd from thy lips have fled ?
Thy coward-function ever is in fear ;
Those arms are dreadful which thou canst not bear.
Why should this bow be fatal to the brave,
Because the priest is born a peaceful slave ? 180

Mark then what others can—— He ended there,
And bad Melanthius a vast pile prepare ;
He gives it instant flame : then fast beside
Spreads o'er an ample board a bullock's hide.
With melted lard they soak the weapon o'er, 185
Chafe ev'ry knot, and supple ev'ry pore.

Vain all their art, and all their strength as vain ;
The bow inflexible resists their pain.
The force of great Eurymachus alone
And bold Antinous, yet untry'd, unknown : 190
Those only now remain'd ; but those confess
Of all the train the mightiest and the best.

Then from the hall, and from the noisy crew,
The masters of the herd and flock withdrew.
The king observes them : he the hall forsakes, 195
And, past the limits of the court, o'ertakes,
Then thus with accent mild Ulysses spoke :
Ye faithful guardians of the herd and flock !
Shall I the secret of my breast conceal,
Or (as my soul now dictates) shall I tell ? 200

Say, should some fav'ring God restore again
The lost Ulysses to his native reign ?
How beat your hearts ? what aid would you afford ?
To the proud suitors, or your antient lord ?

Philætiüs thus : Oh were thy word not vain ! 205
Would mighty Jove restore that man again !
These aged sinews with new vigour strung
In his bless'd cause should emulate the young.

With

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With equal vows Eumæus too implor'd
Each pow'r above, with wishes for his lord. 210

He saw their secret souls, and thus began.
Those vows the Gods accord: behold the man!
Your own Ulysses! twice ten years detain'd
By woes and wand'rings from this hapless land:
At length he comes; but comes despis'd, unknown, 215
And finding faithful you, and you alone.

All else have cast him from their very thought,
Ev'n in their wishes, and their pray'rs forgot!
Hear then, my friends! If Jove this arm succeed,
And give yon impious revellers to bleed, 220

My care shall be, to bless your future lives
With large possessions, and with faithful wives;
Fast by my palace shall your domes ascend,
And each on young Telemachus attend,
And each be call'd his brother, and my friend. 225

To give you firmer faith, now trust your eye:
Lo! the broad scar indented on my thigh,
When with Autolycus's sons, of yore,
On Parnass' top I chas'd the tusk'd boar.

His ragged vest then drawn aside disclos'd 230
The sign conspicuous, and the scar expos'd:
Eager they view'd; with joy they stood amaz'd;
With tearful eyes o'er all their master gaz'd:
Around his neck their longing arms they cast,
His head, his shoulders, and his knees embrac'd: 235
Tears follow'd tears; no word was in their pow'r:
In solemn silence fell the kindly show'r.

The king too weeps, the king too grasps their hands,
And moveless, as a marble fountain, stands.

Thus had their joy wept down the setting sun; 240
But first the wise man ceas'd, and thus begun.
Enough — on other cares your thought employ,
For danger waits on all untimely joy.

Full many foes, and fierce, observe us near:
Some may betray, and yonder walls may hear. 245
Re enter then, not all at once, but stay
Some moments you, and let me lead the way.

To

To me, neglected as I am, I know
 The haughty suitors will deny the bow;
 But thou, Eumæus, as 'tis borne away, 250
 Thy master's weapon to his hand convey.
 At ev'ry portal let some matron wait,
 And each lock fast the well-compacted gate:
 Close let them keep, whate'er invades their ear;
 Tho' arms, or shouts, or dying groans they hear. 255
 To thy strict charge, Philætius! we consign
 The court's main gate: to guard that pass be thine.

This said, he first return'd: the faithful swains
 At distance follow, as their king ordains.
 Before the flame Eurymachus now stands, 260
 And turns the bow, and chafes it with his hands:
 Still the tough bow unmov'd. The lofty man
 Sigh'd from his mighty soul, and thus began.

I mourn the common cause: for, oh my friends!
 On me, on all, what grief, what shame attends? 265
 Not the lost nuptials can affect me more,
 (For Greece has beauteous dames on ev'ry shore);
 But baffled thus! confess'd so far below
 Ulysses' strength, as not to bend his bow!
 How shall all ages our attempt deride! 270
 Our weakness scorn! Antinous thus reply'd.

Not so, Eurymachus: that no man draws
 The wondrous bow, attend another cause.
 Sacred to Phœbus is the solemn day,
 Which thoughtless we in games would waste away: 275
 Till the next dawn this ill-tim'd strife forego,
 And here leave fix'd the ringlets in a row.
 Now bid the sew'r approach, and let us join
 In due libations, and in rites divine;
 So end our night: before the day shall spring, 280
 The choicest off'rings let Melanthius bring:
 Let then to Phœbus' name the fatted thighs
 Feed the rich smokes, high-curling to the skies.
 So shall the patron of these arts bestow
 (For his the gift) the skill to bend the bow. 285

They heard well-pleas'd: the ready heralds bring
 The cleansing waters from the limpid spring:

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The goblet high with rosy wine they crown'd,
In order circling to the peers around.
That rite complete, uprose the thoughtful man, 290
And thus his meditated scheme began.

If what I ask your noble minds approve,
Ye peers and rivals in the royal love!
Chief, if it hurt not great Antinous' ear,
(Whose sage decision I with wonder hear), 295
And if Eurymachus the motion please ;

Give heav'n this day, and rest the bow in peace.
To-morrow let your arms dispute the prize,
And take it he, the favour'd of the skies!

But since till then this trial you delay, 300
Trust it one moment to my hands to-day:

Fain would I prove, before your judging eyes,
What once I was, whom wretched you despise ;

If yet this arm its ancient force retain ;
Or if my woes, (a long-continu'd train), 305 }
And wants, and insults, make me less than man,

Rage flash'd in lightning from the suitors' eyes,
Yet mix'd with terror at the bold emprise.

Antinous then : O miserable guest !
Is common sense quite banish'd from thy breast ? 310
Suffic'd it not within the palace plac'd

To sit distinguish'd, with our presence grac'd,
Admitted here with princes to confer,

A man unknown, a needy wanderer ?
To copious wine this insolence we owe, 315

And much thy betters wine can overthrow :

The great Eurytion when this frenzy stung,
Pirithous' roofs with frantic riot rung :

Boundless the Centaur rag'd ; till one and all
The heroes rose, and dragg'd him from the hall ; 320

His nose they shorten'd, and his ears they slit,

And sent him sober'd home, with better wit.

Hence with long war the double race was curst,
Fatal to all, but to th' aggressor first.

Such fate I prophesy our guest attends, 325
If here this interdicted bow he bends :

Nor

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Nor shall these walls such insolence contain ;
The first fair wind transports him o'er the main ;
Where Echetus to death the guilty brings,
(The worst of mortals, ev'n the worst of kings). 330
Better than that, if thou approve our cheer,
Cease the mad strife, and share our bounty here.

To this the queen her just dislike express :
'Tis impious, prince ! to harm the stranger-guest,
Base to insult who bears a suppliant's name, 335
And some respect Telemachus may claim.
What if th' immortals on the man bestow
Sufficient strength to draw the mighty bow ?
Shall I, a queen, by rival chiefs ador'd,
Accept a wand'ring stranger for my lord ? 340
A hope so idle never touch'd his brain :
Then ease your bosoms of a fear so vain.
Far be he banish'd from this stately scene,
Who wrongs his princess with a thought so mean.

O-fair ! and wisest of so fair a kind ! 345
(Respectful thus Eurymachus rejoin'd) :
Mov'd by no weak surmise, but sense of shame,
We dread the all-arraigning voice of fame ;
We dread the censure of the meanest slave,
The weakest woman : all can wrong the brave. 350
" Behold what wretches to the bed pretend
" Of that brave chief whose bow they could not bend !
" In came a beggar of the strolling crew,
" And did what all those princes could not do."
Thus will the common voice our deed defame, 355
And thus posterity upbraid our name.

To whom the queen : If fame engage your views,
Forbear those acts which infamy pursues ;
Wrong and oppression no renown can raise ;
Know, friend ! that virtue is the path to praise. 360
The stature of our guest, his port, his face,
Speak him descended from no vulgar race.
To him the bow, as he desires, convey ;
And to his hand if Phœbus give the day,
Hence, to reward his merit, he shall bear 365
A two-edg'd faulchion and a shining spear,

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Embroider'd sandals, a rich cloak and vest,
And safe conveyance to his port of rest.

O royal mother! ever-honour'd name!
Permit me (cries Telemachus) to claim
A son's just right. No Grecian prince but I
Has pow'r this bow to grant, or to deny.

370

Of all that Ithaca's rough hills contain,
And all wide Elis' courser-breeding plain,
To me alone my father's arms descend;
And mine alone they are, to give or lend.

375

Retire, oh queen! thy household task resume,
Tend, with thy maids, the labours of the loom;
The bow, the darts, and arms of chivalry,
These cares to man belong, and most to me.

380

Mature beyond his years, the queen admir'd
His sage reply, and with her train retir'd:
There in her chamber as she sat apart,
Revolv'd his words, and plac'd them in her heart.
On her Ulysses then she fix'd her soul,
Down her fair cheek the tears abundant roll,
Till gentle Pallas, piteous of her cries,
In slumber clos'd her silver-streaming eyes.

385

Now thro' the press the bow Eumæus bore,
And all was riot, noise, and wild uproar.
Hold, lawless rustic! whither wilt thou go?
To whom, insensate, dost thou bear the bow?
Exil'd for this to some sequester'd den,
Far from the sweet society of men,
To thy own dogs a prey thou shalt be made;
If heav'n and Phœbus lend the suitors aid.

390

395

Thus they. Aghast he laid the weapon down,
But bold Telemachus thus urg'd him on:
Proceed, false slave, and slight their empty words;
What! hopes the fool to please so many lords?
Young as I am, thy prince's vengeful hand,
Stretch'd forth in wrath, shall drive thee from the land.
Oh! could the vigour of this arm as well
Th' oppressive suitors from my walls expel!
Then what a shoal of lawless men should go
To fill with tumult the dark courts below!

405

The

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The suitors with a scornful smile survey
 The youth, indulging in the genial day.
 Eumæus, thus encourag'd, hastes to bring
 The strifeſul bow, and gives it to the king. 410
 Old Euryclea calling then aſide,
 Hear what Telemachus enjoins, (he cry'd):
 At ev'ry portal let ſome matron wait,
 And each lock faſt the well-compacted gate;
 And if unuſual ſounds invade their ear, 415
 If arms, or ſhouts, or dying groans they hear,
 Let none to call or iſſue forth preſume,
 But cloſe attend the labours of the loom.

Her prompt obedience on his order waits;
 Clos'd in an inſtant were the palace-gates. 420
 In the ſame moment forth Philætiſ flies,
 Secures the court, and with a cable ties
 The utmoſt gate; (the cable ſtrongly wrought
 Of Byblos' reed, a ſhip from Egypt brought);
 Then unperceiv'd and ſilent at the board. 425
 His ſeat he takes, his eyes upon his lord.

And now his well-known bow the maſter bore,
 Turn'd on all ſides, and view'd it o'er and o'er;
 Left time or worms had done the weapon wrong,
 Its owner abſent, and untry'd ſo long. 430
 While ſome deriding:—How he turns the bow!
 Some other like it ſure the man muſt know,
 Or elſe would copy; or in bows he deals;
 Perhaps he makes them, or perhaps he ſteals.—
 Heav'n to this wretch (another cry'd) be kind! 435
 And bleſs, in all to which he ſtands inclin'd,
 With ſuch good fortune as he now ſhall find.

Heedleſs he heard them; but diſdain'd reply;
 The bow peruſing with exacteſt eye.
 Then, as ſome heav'nly miſtreſs, taught to ſing. 440
 High notes reſponſive to the trembling ſtring,
 To ſome new ſtrain when he adapts the lyre,
 Or the dumb lute reſits with vocal wire,
 Relaxes, ſtrains, and draws them to and fro;
 So the great maſter drew the mighty bow: 445

And drew with ease. One hand aloft display'd
 The bending horns, and one the string essay'd.
 From his essaying hand the string let fly,
 'Twang'd short and sharp, like the shrill swallow's cry.
 A gen'ral horror ran thro' all the race, 450
 Sunk was each heart, and pale was ev'ry face.
 Signs from above ensu'd: th' unfolding sky
 In lightning burst: Jove thunder'd from on high.
 Fir'd at the call of heav'n's almighty Lord,
 He snatch'd the shaft that glitter'd on the board: 455
 (Fast by, the rest lay sleeping in the sheath,
 But soon to fly the messengers of death).

Now sitting as he was, the cord he drew,
 Thro' ev'ry ringlet levelling his view;
 Then notch'd the shaft, releas'd, and gave it wing; 460
 The whizzing arrow vanish'd from the string,
 Sung on direct, and threaded ev'ry ring.
 The solid gate its fury scarcely bounds;
 Pierc'd thro' and thro', the solid gate resounds.

Then to the prince: Nor have I wrought thee shame;
 Nor err'd this hand unfaithful to its aim; 466
 Nor prov'd the toil too hard; nor have I lost
 That ancient vigour, once my pride and boast.
 Ill I deserv'd these haughty peers' disdain;
 Now let them comfort their dejected train, 470
 In sweet repast the present hour employ,
 Nor wait till ev'ning for the genial joy:
 Then to the lute's soft voice prolong the night;
 Music, the banquet's most refin'd delight.

He said; then gave a nod; and at the word 475
 Telemachus girds on his shining sword.
 Fast by his father's side he takes his stand;
 The beamy jav'lin lightens in his hand.

T H E
O D Y S S E Y.

B O O K XXII.

T H E A R G U M E N T.

The death of the suitors.

Ulysses begins the slaughter of the suitors by the death of Antinous. He declares himself, and lets fly his arrows at the rest. Telemachus assists, and brings arms for his father, himself, Eumæus, and Philætius. Melanthius does the same for the wooers. Minerva encourages Ulysses in the shape of Mentor. The suitors are all slain, only Medon and Phemius are spared. Melanthius and the unfaithful servants are executed. The rest acknowledge their master with all demonstrations of joy.

Then fierce the hero o'er the threshold strode ;
Stript of his rags, he blaz'd out like a God.
Full in their face the lifted bow he bore,
And quiver'd deaths, a formidable store ;
Before his feet the rattling show'r he threw, 5
And thus terrific, to the suitor-crew.

One ven'trous game this hand has won to-day ;
Another, princes ! yet remains to play ;
Another mark our arrow must attain.
Phœbus assist ! nor be the labour vain. 10

Swift as the word the parting arrow sings,
And bears thy fate, Antinous, on its wings :
Wretch that he was, of unprophetic soul !
High in his hands he rear'd the golden bowl !

Ev'n

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Ev'n then to drain it lengthen'd out his breath ; 15
 Chang'd to the deep, the bitter draught of death :
 For fate who fear'd amidst a featlful band ?
 And fate to numbers, by a single hand ?
 Full through his throat Ulysses' weapon past,
 And pierc'd the neck. He falls, and breathes his last.
 The tumbling goblet the wide floor o'erflows, 21
 A stream of gore burst spouting from his nose ;
 Grim in convulsive agonies he sprawls :
 Before him spurn'd, the loaded table falls,
 And spreads the pavement with a mingled flood. 25
 Of floating meats, and wine, and human blood.
 Amaz'd, confounded, as they saw him fall,
 Uprose the throngs tumultuous round the hall ;
 O'er all the dome they cast a haggard eye ;
 Each look'd for arms : in vain ; no arms were nigh : 30
 Aim'lt thou at princes ! (all amaz'd they said) :
 Thy last of games unhappy hast thou play'd ;
 Thy erring shaft has made our bravest bleed ;
 And death, unlucky guest, attends thy deed.
 Vultures shall tear thee. — Thus incens'd they spoke, 35
 While each to chance ascrib'd the wondrous stroke,
 Blind as they were ; for death ev'n now invades
 His destin'd prey, and wraps them all in shades.
 Then grimly frowning with a dreadful look,
 That wither'd all their hearts, Ulysses spoke. 40
 Dogs ! ye have had your day ; ye fear'd no more
 Ulysses vengeful from the Trojan shore ;
 While to your lust and spoil a guardless prey,
 Our house, our wealth, our helpless handmaids lay :
 Not so content, with bolder frenzy fir'd, 45
 Ev'n to our bed presumptuous you aspir'd :
 Laws or divine or human fail'd to move,
 Or shame of men, or dread of Gods above ;
 Heedless alike of infamy or praise,
 Or fame's eternal voice in future days : 50
 The hour of vengeance, wretches, now is come,
 Impending fate is yours, and instant doom.
 Thus dreadful he. Confus'd the suitors stood,
 From their pale cheeks recedes the flying blood ;

Trembling.

Book XXII. HOMER's ODYSSEY. 345

Trembling they sought their guilty heads to hide, 55
Alone the bold Eurymachus reply'd.

If, as thy words import, (he thus began),
Ulysses lives, and thou the mighty man,
Great are thy wrongs, and much hast thou sustain'd
In thy spoil'd palace, and exhausted land ; 60
The cause and author of those guilty deeds,
Lo ! at thy feet unjust Antinous bleeds.
Not love, but wild ambition was his guide ;
To slay thy son, thy kingdoms to divide,
These were his aims ; but juster Jove deny'd. 65 }
Since cold in death th' offender lies, oh spare
Thy suppliant people, and receive their pray'r !
Brass, gold, and treasures shall the spoil defray, }
Two hundred oxen ev'ry prince shall pay : }
The waste of years refunded in a day. 70 }
Till then thy wrath is just. — Ulysses burn'd
With high disdain, and sternly thus return'd.

All, all the treasures that enrich'd our throne
Before your rapines, join'd with all your own,
If offer'd, vainly should for mercy call ; 75
'Tis you that offer, and I scorn them all ;
Your blood is my demand, your lives the prize,
Till pale as yonder wretch each suitor lies.
Hence with those coward terms ; or fight, or fly ;
This choice is left ye, to resist or die ; 80
And die I trust ye shall. — He sternly spoke :
With guilty fears the pale assembly shook.

Alone Eurymachus exhorts the train :
Yon archer, comrades, will not shoot in vain ;
But from the threshold shall his darts be sped, 85
(Whoe'er he be), till ev'ry prince lie dead.
Be mindful of yourselves, draw forth your swords,
(So need compels). Then, all united strive
And to his shafts obtend these ample boards,
The bold invader from his post to drive ; 90
The city rous'd shall to our rescue haste,
And this mad archer soon have shot his last.

Swift as he spoke, he drew his traitor-sword,
And like a lion rush'd against his lord :

The

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The wary chief the rushing foe repress, 95
 Who met the point, and forc'd it in his breast :
 His failing hand deserts the lifted sword,
 And prone he falls extended o'er the board !
 Before him wide, in mix'd effusion roll
 Th' untasted viands, and the jovial bowl. 100
 Full through his liver pass'd the mortal wound,
 With dying rage his forehead beats the ground ;
 He spurn'd the seat with fury as he fell,
 And the fierce soul to darkness div'd, and hell.

Next bold Amphinomus his arm extends 105
 To force the pass : the godlike man defends.
 Thy spear, Telemachus ! prevents th' attack,
 The brazen weapon driving through his back,
 Thence through his breast its bloody passage tore ;
 Flat falls he thund'ring on the marble floor, 110
 And his crush'd forehead marks the stone with gore. }
 He left his jav'lin in the dead, for fear
 The long incumbrance of the weighty spear
 To the fierce foe advantage might afford,
 To rush between, and use the shorten'd sword. 115
 With speedy ardour to his sire he flies,
 And, Arm, great father ! arm (in haste he cries) :
 Lo, hence I run for other arms to wield,
 For missile jav'lins, and for helm and shield ;
 Fast by our side let either faithful swain 120
 In arms attend us, and their part sustain.

Haste and return, (Ulysses made reply),
 While yet th' auxiliar shafts this hand supply ;
 Lest thus alone, encounter'd by an host,
 Driv'n from the gate, th' important pass be lost. 125

With speed Telemachus obeys, and flies
 Where pil'd on heaps the royal armour lies ;
 Four brazen helmets, eight refulgent spears,
 And four broad bucklers, to his sire he bears :
 At once in brazen panoply they shone, 130
 At once each servant brac'd his armour on ;
 Around their king a faithful guard they stand,
 While yet each shaft flew deathful from his hand :
 Chief

Chief after chief expir'd at ev'ry wound,
 And swell'd the bleeding mountain on the ground. 135
 Soon as his store of flying fates was spent,
 Against the wall he set the bow unbent :
 And now his shoulders bear the massy shield,
 And now his hands two beamy jav'lins wield :
 He frowns beneath his nodding plume, that play'd 140
 O'er the high crest, and cast a dreadful shade.

There stood a window near, whence looking down
 From o'er the porch, appear'd the subject town.
 A double strength of valves secur'd the place,
 A high and narrow, but the only pass : 145
 The cautious king, with all-preventing care,
 To guard that outlet, plac'd Eumæus there.
 When Agelaïus thus : Has none the sense
 To mount yon window, and alarm from thence
 The neighbour town ? the town shall force the door, 150
 And this bold archer soon shall shoot no more.

Melanthius then : That outlet to the gate
 So near adjoins, that one may guard the strait.
 But other methods of defence remain,
 Myself with arms can furnish all the train ; 155
 Stores from the royal magazine I bring,
 And their own darts shall pierce the prince and king.

He said ; and mounting up the lofty stairs,
 Twelve shields, twelve lances, and twelve helmets bears :
 All arm, and sudden round the hall appears 160
 A blaze of bucklers, and a wood of spears.

The hero stands oppress'd with mighty wo,
 On ev'ry side he sees the labour grow :
 Oh curs'd event ! and oh unlook'd-for aid !
 Melanthius or the women have betray'd — 165
 Oh my dear son ! — The father, with a sigh !
 Then ceas'd. The filial virtue made reply.

Falseness is folly, and 'tis just to own
 The fault committed : this was mine alone ;
 My haste neglected yonder door to bar, 170
 And hence the villain has supply'd their war.
 Run, good Eumæus, then, and (what before
 I thoughtless err'd in) well secure that door :

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Learn if by female fraud this deed were done,
Or (as my thought misgives) by Dolius' son. 175

While yet they spoke, in quest of arms again
To the high chamber stole the faithless swain ;
Not unobserv'd. Eumæus watchful ey'd,
And thus address'd Ulysses near his side.

The miscreant we suspected takes that way ; 180
Him, if this arm be pow'rful, shall I slay ?
Or drive him hither, to receive the meed,
From thy own hand, of this detested deed ?

Not so, (reply'd Ulysses), leave him there ;
For us sufficient is another care : 185

Within the stricture of this palace-wall
To keep inclos'd his masters till they fall.
Go you and seize the felon ; backward bind
His arms and legs, and fix a plank behind ;
On this, his body by strong cords extend, 190
And on a column near the roof suspend ; }
So study'd tortures his vile days shall end.

The ready swains obey'd with joyful haste ;
Behind the felon unperceiv'd they past,
As round the room in quest of arms he goes : 195
(The half-shut door conceal'd his lurking foes).

One hand sustain'd a helm, and one the shield
Which old Laertes wont in youth to wield,
Cover'd with dust, with driness chapt and worn,
The brass corroded, and the leather torn : 200

Thus laden, o'er the threshold as he stept,
Fierce on the villain from each side they leapt ;
Back by the hair the trembling dastard drew,
And down reluctant on the pavement threw.
Active and pleas'd, the zealous swains fulfil 205

At ev'ry point their master's rigid will :
First, fast behind, his hands and feet they bound,
Then streighten'd cords involv'd his body round :
So drawn aloft, athwart the column ty'd,
The howling felon swung from side to side. 210

Eumæus scoffing then with keen disdain :
There pass thy pleasing night, oh gentle swain !

On

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On that soft pillow, from that envy'd height
First mayst thou see the springing dawn of light ;
So timely rise, when morning streaks the east, 215
To drive thy victims to the suitors feast.

This said, they left him, tortur'd as he lay,
Secur'd the door, and hasty strode away :
Each, breathing death, resum'd his dang'rous post
Near great Ulysses ; four against an host. 220
When lo ! descending to her hero's aid,
Jove's daughter Pallas, war's triumphant maid :
In Mentor's friendly form she join'd his side ;
Ulysses saw, and thus with transport cry'd.

Come, ever welcome, and thy succour lend ; 225
Oh ev'ry sacred name in one ! my friend !
Early we lov'd, and long our loves have grown.
Whate'er through life's whole series I have done
Or good or grateful, now to mind recall,
And aiding this one hour, repay it all. 230

Thus he ; but pleasing hopes his bosom warm
Of Pallas latent in the friendly form.

The adverse host the phantom-warrior ey'd,
And first, loud threat'ning, Agelaüs cry'd.

Mentor, beware ; nor let that tongue persuade 235
Thy frantic arm to lend Ulysses aid ;
Our force successful shall our threat make good,
And with the fire's and son's commix thy blood.
What hop'st thou he e ? Thee first the sword shall slay,
Then lop thy whole posterity away ; 240

Far hence thy banish'd consort shall we send ;
With his, thy forfeit lands and treasures blend ;
Thus, and thus only, shalt thou join thy friend. }

His barb'rous insult ev'n the Goddess fires,
Who thus the warrior to revenge inspires. 245

Art thou Ulysses ? where then shall we find
The patient body and the constant mind ?
That courage, once the Trojans daily dread,
Known nine long years, and felt by heroes dead ?
And where that conduct, which reveng'd the loss 250
Of Priam's race, and laid proud Troy in dust ?

350 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book XXII

If this, when Helen was the cause, were done ;
 What for thy country now, thy queen, thy son ?
 Rise then in combat, at my side attend ;
 Observe what vigour gratitude can lend,
 And foes how weak, oppos'd against a friend !

255 }

She spoke ; but willing longer to survey
 The fire and son's great acts, with-held the day ;
 By farther toils decreed the brave to try,
 And level pois'd the wings of victory :
 Then with a change of form eludes their sight,
 Perch'd like a swallow on a rafter's height,
 And unperceiv'd enjoys the rising fight.

260 }

Damastor's son, bold Agelaüs, leads
 The guilty war ; Eurynomus succeeds ;
 With these Pisander, great Polyctor's son,
 Sage Polybus, and stern Amphimedon,
 With Demoptolemus : these six survive ;
 The best of all the shafts had left alive.
 Amidst the carnage desp'rate as they stand,
 Thus Agelaüs rous'd the lagging band.

265

270

The hour is come, when yon fierce man no more
 With bleeding princes shall bestrow the floor :
 Lo ! Mentor leaves him with an empty boast ;
 The four remain, but four against an host.
 Let each at once discharge the deadly dart,
 One sure of six shall reach Ulysses' heart :
 Thus shall one stroke the glory lost regain :
 The rest must perish, their great leader slain.

275

Then all at once their mingled lances threw,
 And thirsty all of one man's blood they flew ;
 In vain ! Minerva turn'd them with her breath,
 And scatter'd short, or wide, the points of death ;
 With deaden'd sound, one on the threshold falls,
 One strikes the gate, one rings against the walls ;
 The storm pass'd innocent. The godlike man
 Now loftier trod, and dreadful thus began.

280

285

'Tis now (brave friends) our turn, at once to throw
 (So speed them heav'n !) our jav'lines at the foe.
 That impious race to all their past misdeeds
 Would add our blood. Injustice still proceeds.

290

He

He spoke : at once their fiery lances flew :
 Great Demoptolemus, Ulysses flew ;
 Euryades receiv'd the prince's dart ;
 The goatherd's quiver'd in Pisander's heart ; 295
 Fierce Elatus by thine, Eumæus, falls ;
 Their fall in thunder echoes round the walls.
 The rest retreat. The victors now advance,
 Each from the dead resumes his bloody lance.
 Again the foe discharge the steely show'r ; 300
 Again made frustrate by the virgin pow'r.
 Some, turn'd by Pallas, on the threshold fall,
 Some wound the gate, some ring against the wall ;
 Some weak, or pond'rous with the brazen head,
 Drop harmless, on the pavement sounding dead. 305

Then bold Amphimedon his jav'lin cast ;
 Thy hand, Telemachus, it rightly raz'd :
 And from Ctesippus' arm the spear elanc'd,
 On good Eumæus' shield and shoulder glanc'd ;
 Not lessen'd of their force, (so slight the wound), 310
 Each sung along, and dropp'd upon the ground.
 Fate doom'd thee next, Eurydamus, to bear
 Thy death, ennobl'd by Ulysses' spear.
 By the bold son Amphimedon was slain ;
 And Polybus renown'd the faithful swain. 315
 Pierc'd through the breast the rude Ctesippus bled ;
 And thus Philætiüs glory'd o'er the dead.

There end thy pompous vaunts and high disdain,
 Oh sharp in scandal, voluble and vain !
 How weak is mortal pride ! To heav'n alone 320
 Th' event of actions and our fates are known.
 Scoffer, behold what gratitude we bear :
 The victim's heel is answer'd with this spear.

Ulysses brandish'd high his vengeful steel,
 And Damastorides that instant fell ; 325
 Fast by Leocritus expiring lay,
 The prince's jav'lin tore its bloody way
 Through all his bowels : down he tumbles prone,
 His batter'd front and brains besmear the stone.

Now Pallas shines confess'd ; aloft she spreads 330
 The arm of vengeance o'er their guilty heads ;

352 HOMER's ODYSSEY. Book XXII.

The dreadful ægis blazes in their eye ;
 Amaz'd they see, they tremble, and they fly :
 Confus'd, distract'd, through the rooms they fling,
 Like oxen madden'd by the breefe's sling, } 335
 When sultry days, and long, succeed the gentle spring. }
 Not half so keen, fierce vultures of the chace
 Sroop from the mountains on the feather'd race,
 When the wide field extended snares beset,
 With conscious dread they shun the quiv'ring net : 340
 No help, no flight ; but wounded ev'ry way,
 Headlong they drop : the fowlers seize the prey.
 On all sides thus they double wound on wound ;
 In prostrate heaps the wretches beat the ground,
 Unmanly shrieks precede each dying groan, 345
 And a red deluge floats the reeking stone.

Leiodes first before the victor falls :
 The wretched augur thus for mercy calls.
 O gracious hear, nor let thy suppliant bleed :
 Still undishonour'd or by word or deed 350
 Thy house, for me, remains ; by me repress't
 Full oft was check'd th' injustice of the rest :
 Averse they heard me when I counsell'd well,
 Their hearts were harden'd, and they justly fell.
 Oh spare an augur's consecrated head, 355
 Nor add the blameless to the guilty dead.

Priest as thou art ! for that detested band
 Thy lying prophecies deceiv'd the land :
 Against Ulysses have thy vows been made ;
 For them thy daily orisons were paid : 360
 Yet more, ev'n to our bed thy pride aspires :
 One common crime one common fate requires.

Thus speaking, from the ground the sword he took
 Which Agelaüs' dying hand forsook ;
 Full through his neck the weighty faulchion sped : 365
 Along the pavement roll'd the muti'ring head.

Phemius alone the hand of vengeance spar'd,
 Phemius the sweet, the heav'n-instructed bard.
 Beside the gate the rev'rend minstrel stands ;
 The lyre, now silent, trembling in his hands ; 370

Dubious

Book XXII. HOMER's ODYSSEY. 353

Dubious to supplicate the chief, or fly
To Jove's inviolable altar nigh,
Where oft Laertes holy vows had paid,
And oft Ulysses smoking victims laid.
His honour'd harp with care he first set down, 375
Between the laver and the silver throne :
Then prostrate stretch'd before the dreadful man,
Persuasive, thus, with accent soft began.

O king ! to mercy be thy soul inclin'd,
And spare the poet's ever-gentle kind. 380
A deed like this thy future fame would wrong,
For dear to Gods and men is sacred song.
Self-taught I sing : by heav'n, and heav'n alone,
The genuine seeds of poesy are sown ;
And (what the Gods bestow) the lofty lay, 385
To Gods alone, and godlike worth, we pay.
Save then the poet, and thyself reward ;
'Tis thine to merit, mine is to record.
That here I sung, was force, and not desire ;
This hand reluctant touch'd the warbling wire : 390
And let thy son attest, nor sordid pay,
Nor servile flatt'ry, stain'd the moral lay.

The moving words Telemachus attends,
His fire approaches, and the bard defends.
Oh mix not, father, with those impious dead. 395
The man divine ! forbear that sacred head.
Medon the herald too our arms may spare,
Medon, who made my infancy his care ;
If yet he breathes, permit thy son to give
Thus much to gratitude, and bid him live. 400

Beneath a table, trembling with dismay,
Couch'd close to earth, unhappy Medon lay,
Wrapt in a new-slain ox's ample hide :
Swift at the word he cast his screen aside,
Sprung to the prince, embrac'd his knee with tears, 405
And thus with grateful voice address'd his ears.

O prince ! O friend ! lo here thy Medon stands ;
Ah stop the hero's unresisted hands,
Incens'd too justly by that impious brood,
Whose guilty glories now are set in blood. 410

354 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book XXII.

To whom Ulysses with a pleasing eye :
 Be bold, on friendship and my son rely ;
 Live, an example for the world to read,
 How much more safe the good than evil deed :
 'Thou, with the heav'n-taught bard, in peace resort 415
 From blood and carnage to yon open court :
 Me other work requires. — With tim'rous awe
 From the dire scene th' exempted two withdraw,
 Scarce sure of life, look round, and trembling move
 To the bright altars of Protector Jove. 420

Meanwhile Ulysses search'd the dome, to find
 If yet there live of all th' offending kind.
 Not one ! — complete the bloody tale he found,
 All steep'd in blood, all gasping on the ground.
 So, when by hollow shores the fisher train 425
 Sweep with their arching nets the hoary main,
 And scarce the meshy toils the copious draught contain,
 All naked of their element, and bare,
 The fishes pant, and gasp in thinner air ;
 Wide o'er the sands are spread the stiff'ning prey, 430
 Till the warm sun exhales their soul away.

And now the king commands his son to call
 Old Euryclea to the deathful hall :
 The son observant not a moment stays ;
 The aged governess with speed obeys : 435
 The sounding portals instant they display ;
 The matron moves, the prince directs the way.
 On heaps of death the stern Ulysses stood,
 All black with dust, and cover'd thick with blood.
 So the grim lion from the slaughter comes, 440
 Dreadful he glares, and terribly he foams,
 His breast with marks of carnage painted o'er,
 His jaws all dropping with the bull's black gore.

Soon as her eyes the welcome object met,
 The guilty fall'n, the mighty deed complete ; 445
 A scream of joy her feeble voice essay'd :
 The hero check'd her, and compos'dly said :

Woman, experienc'd as thou art, control
 Indecent joy, and feast thy secret soul,

T' insult

Book XXII. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 355

T' insult the dead is cruel and unjust ; 450
Fate, and their crime, have sunk them to the dust.
Nor heeded these the censure of mankind,
The good and bad were equal in their mind.
Justly the price of worthlessness they paid,
And each now wails an unlamented shade. 455
But thou, sincere, oh Euryclea ! say,
What maids dishonour us, and what obey ?

Then she : In these thy kingly walls remain
(My son) full fifty of the handmaid train,
Taught by my care to cull the fleece, or weave, 460
And servitude with pleasing tasks deceive.
Of these, twice six pursue their wicked way,
Nor me nor chaste Penelope obey ;
Nor fits it that Telemachus command
(Young as he is) his mother's female band. 465
Hence to the upper chambers let me fly,
Where slumbers soft now close the royal eye ;
There wake her with the news — The matron cry'd.
Not so (Ulysses more sedate reply'd) ;
Bring first the crew who wrought these guilty deeds ; 470
In haste the matron parts : the king proceeds.

Now to dispose the dead, the care remains
To you, my son, and you, my faithful swains ;
Th' offending females to that task we doom,
To wash, to scent, and purify the room. 475
These (ev'ry table cleans'd, and ev'ry throne,
And all the melancholy labour done)
Drive to yon court, without the palace-wall,
There the revenging sword shall smite them all ;
So with the suitors let them mix in dust, 480
Stretch'd in a long oblivion of their lust.

He said : the lamentable train appear ;
Each vents a groan, and drops a tender tear ;
Each heav'd her mournful burthen, and beneath
The porch, depos'd the ghastly heaps of death. 485
The chief severe, compelling each to move,
Urg'd the dire task imperious from above.

356 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book XXII.

With thirsty sponge they rub the tables o'er,
(The swains unite their toil) ; the walls, the floor
Wash'd with th' effusive wave, are purg'd of gore. }
Once more the palace set in fair array, 491

To the base court the females take their way ;
There compass'd close between the dome and wall,
(Their life's last scene) they trembling wait their fall.

Then thus the prince : To these shall we afford 495
A fate so pure, as by the martial sword ;
To these, the nightly prostitutes to shame,
And base revilers of our house and name ?

Thus speaking, on the circling wall he strung
A ship's tough cable, from a column hung ; 500
Near the high top he strain'd it strongly round,
Whence no contending foot could reach the ground.

Their heads above connected in a row,
They beat the air with quiv'ring feet below.
Thus on some tree hung struggling in the snare, 505
The doves or thrushes flap their wings in air.
Soon fled the soul impure, and left behind
The empty corse to waver with the wind.

Then forth they led Melanthius, and began
Their bloody work : they lopp'd away the man, 510
Morsel for dogs ! then trimm'd with brazen sheers.
The wretch, and shorten'd of his nose and ears ;
His hands and feet last felt the cruel steel :
He roar'd, and torments gave his soul to hell —

They wash, and to Ulysses take their way, 515
So ends the bloody bus'ness of the day.

To Euryclea then address'd the king.
Bring hither fire, and hither sulphur bring,
To purge the palace : then the queen attend,
And let her, with her matron-train, descend ; 520
The matron-train, with all the virgin-band,
Assemble here, to learn their lord's command.

Then Euryclea : Joyful I obey,
But cast those mean dishonest rags away ;
Permit me first thy royal robes to bring : 525
All suits this garb the shoulders of a king.

“ Bring

Book XXII. HOMER's ODYSSEY. 357

“ Bring sulphur straight and fire,” (the monarch cries).
She hears, and at the word obedient flies.
With fire and sulphur, cure of noxious fumes,
He purg'd the walls and blood-polluted rooms. 530
Again the matron springs with eager pace,
And spreads her lord's return from place to place.
They bear, rush forth, and instant round him stand,
A gazing throng, a torch in ev'ry hand.
They saw, they knew him, and with fond embrace 535
Each humbly kiss'd his knee, or hand, or face;
He knows them all; in all such truth appears,
Ev'n he indulges the sweet joy of tears.

THE

T H E
O D Y S S E Y.

B O O K XXIII.

T H E A R G U M E N T.

Euryclea awakens Penelope with the news of Ulysses's return, and the death of the suitors. Penelope scarcely credits her, but supposes some God has punished them, and descends from her apartment in doubt. At the first interview of Ulysses and Penelope, she is quite unsatisfied. Minerva restores him to the beauty of his youth; but the queen continues incredulous, till by some circumstances she is convinced, and falls into all the transports of passion and tenderness. They recount to each other all that has passed during their long separation. The next morning Ulysses, arming himself and his friends, goes from the city to visit his father.

Then to the queen, as in repose she lay,
The nurse, with eager rapture, speeds her way;
The transports of her faithful heart supply
A sudden youth, and give her wings to fly.

And sleeps my child? the rev'rend matron cries: 5
Ulysses lives! arise, my child, arise!
At length appears the long expected hour!
Ulysses comes! the suitors are no more!
No more they view the golden light of day;
Arise, and bless thee with the glad survey! 10

Touch'd at her words, the mournful queen rejoin'd,
Ah! whither wanders thy distemper'd mind? 15

The

Book XXIII. HOMER's ODYSSEY. 359

The righteous pow'rs who tread the starry skies,
The weak enlighten, and confound the wise,
And human thought, with unresisted sway, 15
Depress or raise, enlarge or take away :

Truth, by their high decree, thy voice forsakes,
And Folly with the tongue of Wisdom speaks.
Unkind, the fond illusion to impose !
Was it to flatter or deride my woes ? 20

Never did I a sleep so sweet enjoy,
Since my dear lord left Ithaca for Troy :
Why must I wake to grieve, and curse thy shore,
O Troy ? — may never tongue pronounce thee more !
Be gone : another might have felt our rage, 25
But age is sacred, and we spare thy age.

To whom with warmth : My soul a lie disdains ;
Ulysses lives, thy own Ulysses reigns :
That stranger, patient of the suitors' wrongs,
And the rude licence of ungovern'd tongues, 30
He, he is thine ! thy son, his latent guest
Long knew, but lock'd the secret in his breast ;
With well-concerted art to end his woes,
And burst at once in vengeance on the foes.

While yet she spoke, the queen in transport sprung
Swift from the couch, and round the matron hung ; 36
Fast from her eye descends the rolling tear,
Say, once more say, is my Ulysses here ?
How could that num'rous and outrageous band
By one be slain, though by an hero's hand ? 40

I saw it not, she cries, but heard alone,
When death was busy, a loud dying groan ;
The damsel-train turn'd pale at ev'ry wound,
Immur'd we sat, and catch'd each passing sound.
When death had seiz'd her prey, thy son attends, 45
And at his nod the damsel-train descends ;
There terrible in arms Ulysses stood,
And the dead suitors almost swam in blood ;
Thy heart had leap'd the hero to survey,
Stern as the surly lion o'er his prey, 50
Glorious in gore ! — now with sul phureous fires
The dome he purges, now the flame aspires ;

Heap'd

360 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book XXIII.

Heap'd lie the dead without the palace-walls—
 Hasten, daughter, hasten, thy own Ulysses calls !
 Thy ev'ry wish the bounteous Gods bestow, 55
 Enjoy the present good, and former woe.
 Ulysses lives his vanquish'd foes to see ;
 He lives to thy Telemachus and thee !

Ah no ! with sighs Penelope rejoin'd,
 Excess of joy disturbs thy wand'ring mind ; 60
 How bless'd this happy hour, should he appear,
 Dear to us all, to me supremely dear !
 Ah no ! some God the suitors' deaths decreed,
 Some God descends, and by his hand they bleed ;
 Blind ! to condemn the stranger's righteous cause, 65
 And violate all hospitable laws !
 The good they hated, and the pow'rs defy'd ;
 But heav'n is just, and by a God they dy'd.
 For never must Ulysses view this shore ;
 Never ! the lov'd Ulysses is no more ! 70

What words (the matron cries) have reach'd my ears ?
 Doubt we his presence, when he now appears ?
 Then hear conviction : Ere the fatal day
 That forc'd Ulysses o'er the wat'ry way,
 A boar fierce-rushing in the sylvan war 75
 Plough'd half his thigh ; I saw, I saw the scar,
 And wild with transport had reveal'd the wound ;
 But ere I spoke, he rose, and check'd the sound.
 Then, daughter, hasten away ! and if a lie
 Flow from this tongue, then let thy servant die ! 80

To whom with dubious joy the queen replies :
 Wise is thy soul, but errors seize the wife ;
 The works of Gods what mortal can survey ?
 Who knows their motives ? who shall trace their way ?
 But learn we instant how the suitors trod 85
 The paths of death, by man or by a God.

Thus speaks the queen, and no reply attends,
 But with alternate joy and fear descends ;
 At ev'ry step debates, her lord to prove !
 Or rushing to his arms, confess her love ! 90
 Then gliding through the marble valves in state,
 Oppos'd, before the shining fire she sat.

The

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The monarch, by a column high enthron'd,
His eye withdrew, and fix'd it on the ground ;
Curious to hear his queen the silence break : 95
Amaz'd she sat, and impotent to speak ;
O'er all the man her eyes she rolls in vain,
Now hopes, now fears, now knows, then doubts again.
At length Telemachus : — Oh who can find
A woman like Penelope unkind ? 100

Why thus in silence ? why with winning charms
Thus slow to fly with rapture to his arms ?
Stubborn the breast that with no transport glows,
When twice ten years are past of mighty woes :
To softness lost, to spousal love unknown, 105
The Gods have form'd that rigid heart of stone !

O my Telemachus ! the queen rejoin'd,
Distracting fears confound my lab'ring mind ;
Pow'rless to speak, I scarce uplift my eyes,
Nor dare to question : doubts on doubts arise. 110
Oh deign he, if Ulysses, to remove
These boding thoughts, and what he is, to prove !

Pleas'd with her virtuous fears, the king replies :
Indulge, my son, the cautions of the wise ;
Time shall the truth to sure remembrance bring : 115
This garb of poverty belies the king ;
No more. — This day our deepest care requires,
Cautious to act what thought mature inspires.
If one man's blood, though mean, distain our hands,
The homicide retreats to foreign lands ; 120
By us, in heaps, th' illustrious peerage falls,
Th' important deed our whole attention calls.

Be that thy care, Telemachus replies,
The world conspires to speak Ulysses wise ;
For wisdom all is thine ! lo I obey, 125
And dauntless follow where you lead the way ;
Nor shalt thou in the day of danger find
Thy coward son degen'rate lag behind.

Then instant to the bath, (the monarch cries),
Bid the gay youth and sprightly virgins rise, 130
Thence all descend in pomp and proud array,
And bid the dome resound the mirthful lay ;

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While the sweet lyrist airs of rapture sing,
And forms the dance responsive to the strings.
That hence th' eluded passengers may say, 135
Lo ! the queen weds ! we hear the spousal lay !
The suitors' death unknown, till we remove
Far from the court, and act inspir'd by Jove.

Thus spoke the king : th' observant train obey,
At once they bathe, and dress in proud array : 140
The lyrist strikes the string ; gay youths advance,
And fair-zon'd damsels form the sprightly dance.
The voice, attun'd to instrumental sounds,
Ascends the roof ; the vaulted roof rebounds ;
Not unobserv'd : the Greeks eluded say, 145
Lo ! the queen weds ! we hear the spousal lay !
Inconstant ! to admit the bridal hour.

Thus they — but nobly chaste she weds no more.

Meanwhile the weary'd king the bath ascends ;
With faithful cares Eurynome attends, 150
O'er ev'ry limb a show'r of fragrance sheds :
Then dress'd in pomp, magnificent he treads.
The Warrior-Goddes gives his frame to shine
With majesty enlarg'd, and grace divine.
Back from his brows in wavy ringlets fly 155
His thick large locks, of hyacinthine dye.
As by some artist to whom Vulcan gives
His heav'nly skill, a breathing image lives ;
By Pallas taught, he frames the wondrous mold,
And the pale silver glows with fusile gold : 160
So Pallas his heroic form improves
With bloom divine, and like a God he moves ;
More high he treads, and issuing forth in state,
Radiant before his gazing consort sat.

And oh, my queen ! he cries ; what pow'r above 165
Has steel'd that heart, averse to spousal love !
Canst thou, Penelope, when heav'n restores
Thy lost Ulysses to his native shores,
Canst thou, oh cruel ! unconcern'd survey
Thy lost Ulysses on this signal day ? 170
Haste, Euryclea, and dispatchful spread
For me, and me alone, th' imperial bed :

My

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My weary nature craves the balm of rest :
But heav'n with adamant has arm'd her breast.

Ah no ! she cries, a tender heart I bear, 175
A foe to pride ; no adamant is there :

And now, ev'n now it melts ! for sure I see
Once more Ulysses, my belov'd, in thee !
Fix'd in my soul, as when he sail'd to Troy,
His image dwells : then haste the bed of joy ! 180

Haste, from the bridal bow'r the bed translate,
Fram'd by his hand, and be it dress'd in state !

Thus speaks the queen, still dubious, with disguise ;
Touch'd at her words, the king with warmth replies :
Alas for this ! what mortal strength can move 185
Th' enormous burthen ; who but heav'n above ?

It mocks the weak attempts of human hands ;
But the whole earth must move, if heav'n commands.
Then hear sure evidence, while we display
Words seal'd with sacred truth, and truth obey : 190

This hand the wonder fram'd ; an olive spread
Full in the court its ever-verdant head.

Vast as some mighty column's bulk, on high
The huge trunk rose, and heav'd into the sky ;
Around the tree I rais'd a nuptial bow'r, 195
And roof'd defensive of the storm and show'r ;

The spacious valve, with art inwrought, conjoins ;
And the fair dome with polish'd marble shines.

I lopp'd the branchy head ; aloft in twain
Sever'd the bole, and smooth'd the shining grain ; 200

Then posts, capacious of the frame, I raise,
And bore it, regular, from space to space :

Athwart the frame, at equal distance lie
Thongs of tough hides, that boast a purple dye ;
Then polishing the whole, the finish'd mold 205
With silver shone, with elefant, and gold.

But if o'erturn'd by rude ungovern'd hands,
Or still inviolate the olive stands,
'Tis thine, oh queen, to say : and now impart,
If fears remain, or doubts distract thy heart ? 210

While yet he speaks, her pow'rs of life decay,
She sickens, trembles, falls, and faints away :

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At length recov'ring, to his arms she flew,
 And strain'd him close, as to his breast she grew :
 The tears pour'd down amain : and, Oh, she cries, 215
 Let not against thy spouse thine anger rise !
 O vers'd in ev'ry turn of human art,
 Forgive the weakness of a woman's heart !
 The righteous pow'rs that mortal lots dispose,
 Decree us to sustain a length of woes ; 220
 And from the flow'r of life, the blifs deny
 'To bloom together, fade away, and die.
 O let me, let me not thine anger move,
 That I forbore, thus, thus, to speak my love ;
 Thus in fond kisses, while the transport warms, 225
 Pour out my soul, and die within thy arms !
 I dreaded fraud ! Men, faithless men, betray
 Our easy faith, and make the sex their prey :
 Against the fondness of my heart I strove,
 'Twas caution, oh my lord ! not want of love : 230
 Like me had Helen fear'd, with wanton charms
 Ere the fair mischief set two worlds in arms,
 Ere Greece rose dreadful in th' avenging day ;
 Thus had she fear'd, she had not gone astray.
 But heav'n, averse to Greece, in wrath decreed 235
 That she should wander, and that Greece should bleed :
 Blind to the ills that from injustice flow,
 She colour'd all our wretched lives with wo.
 But why these sorrows, when my lord arrives ?
 I yield, I yield ! my own Ulysses lives ! 240
 The secrets of the bridal bed are known
 To thee, to me, to Actoris alone,
 (My father's present in the spousal hour,
 The sole attendant on our genial bow'r).
 Since what no eye has seen, thy tongue reveal'd, 245
 Hard and distrustful as I am, I yield.
 Touch'd to the soul, the king with rapture hears,
 Hangs round her neck, and speaks his joy in tears.
 As to the shipwreck'd mariner, the shores
 Delightful rise, when angry Neptune roars ; 250
 Then, when the surge in thunder mounts the sky,
 And gulf'd in crouds at once the sailors die ;

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If one more happy, while the tempest raves,
 Outlives the tumult of conflicting waves,
 All pale, with ooze deform'd, he views the strand, 255
 And plunging forth with transport grasps the land :
 The ravish'd queen with equal rapture glows,
 Clasps her lov'd lord, and to his bosom grows.
 Nor had they ended till the morning-day :
 But Pallas backward held the rising day, 260
 The wheels of night retarding, to detain
 The gay Aurora in the wavy main :
 Whose flaming steeds, emerging through the night,
 Beam o'er the eastern hills with streaming light.

At length Ulysses with a sigh replies : 265
 Yet fate, yet cruel fate repose denies ;
 A labour long, and hard, remains behind ;
 By heav'n above, by hell beneath injoin'd :
 For to Tiresias through th' eternal gates
 Of hell I trode, to learn my future fates. 270
 But end we here—the night demands repose,
 Be deck'd the couch ! and peace awhile, my woes !

To whom the queen : Thy word we shall obey,
 And deck the couch ; far hence be woes away !
 Since the just Gods, who tread the starry plains, 275
 Restore thee safe, since my Ulysses reigns.
 But what those perils heav'n decrees, impart ;
 Knowledge may grieve, but fear distracts the heart.

To this the king : Ah why must I disclose
 A dreadful story of approaching woes ? 280
 Why in this hour of transport wound thy ears,
 When thou must learn what I must speak with tears ?
 Heav'n, by the Theban ghost, thy spouse decrees,
 Torn from thy arms, to sail a length of seas ;
 From realm to realm a nation to explore 285
 Who ne'er knew salt, or heard the billows roar,
 Nor saw gay vessel stem the surgy plain,
 A painted wonder, flying on the main.
 An oar my hand must bear ; a shepherd eyes
 The unknown instrument with strange surprise, 290
 And calls a corn-van : this upon the plain
 I fix, and hail the monarch of the main ;

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Then bathe his altars with the mingled gore
Of victims vow'd, a ram, a bull, a boar :
Then swift resailing to my native shores, 295
Due victims slay to all th' æthereal pow'rs.
Then heav'n decrees in peace to end my days,
And steal myself from life by slow decays ;
Unknown to pain in age resign my breath,
When late stern Neptune points the shaft of death ; 300
To the dark grave retiring as to rest ;
My people blessing, by my people blest.

Such future scenes th' all-righteous pow'rs display,
By their dread seer *, and such my future day.

To whom thus firm of soul : If ripe for death, 305
And full of days, thou gently yield thy breath ;
While heav'n a kind release from ills foreshows,
Triumph, thou happy victor of thy woes !

But Euryclea, with dispatchful care,
And sage Eurynomè, the couch prepare : 310
Instant they bid the blazing torch display
Around the dome an artificial day ;
Then to repose her steps the matron bends,
And to the queen Eurynomè descends ;
A torch she bears to light with guiding fires 315
The royal pair ; she guides them, and retires.
Then instant his fair spouse Ulysses led
To the chaste love-rites of the nuptial bed.

And now the blooming youths and sprightly fair
Cease the gay dance, and to their rest repair ; 320
But in discourse the king and consort lay,
While the soft hours stole unperceiv'd away ;
Intent he hears Penelope disclose
A mournful story of domestic woes,
His servants insults, his invaded bed, 325
How his whole flocks and herds exhausted bled,
His gen'rous wines dishonour'd shed in vain,
And the wild riots of the suitor-train.
The king alternate a dire tale relates,
Of wars, of triumphs, and disastrous fates ; 330

* Tiresias,

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All he unfolds : his list'ning spouse turns pale
 With pleasing horror at the dreadful tale ;
 Sleepless devours each word ; and hears, how slain
 Cicons on Cicons swell th' ensanguin'd plain ;
 How to the land of Lote unblest'd he sails ; 335
 And images the rills and flow'ry vales !
 How, dash'd like dogs, his friends the Cyclops tore,
 (Not unreveng'd), and quaff'd the spouting gore ;
 How the loud storms in prison bound, he sails
 From friendly Æolus with prosp'rous gales ; 340
 Yet fate withstands ! a sudden tempest roars,
 And whirls him groaning from his native shores :
 How on the barb'rous Læstrigonian coast,
 By savage hands his fleet and friends he lost ;
 How scarce himself surviv'd : he paints the bow'r, 345
 The spells of Circe, and her magic pow'r ;
 His dreadful journey to the realms beneath,
 To seek Tiresias in the vales of death ;
 How in the doleful mansions he survey'd
 His royal mother, pale Anticlea's shade ; 350
 And friends in battle slain, heroic ghosts !
 Then how unharm'd he pass'd the Siren coasts,
 The jutting rocks, where fierce Charybdis raves,
 And howling Scylla whirls her thund'rous waves,
 The cave of death ! How his companions slay 355
 The oxen sacred to the God of day,
 Till Jove in wrath the rattling tempest guides,
 And whelms th' offenders in the roaring tides :
 How struggling through the surge, he reach'd the shores
 Of fair Ogygia, and Calypso's bow'rs ; 360
 Where the gay blooming nymph constrain'd his stay,
 With sweet, reluctant, amorous delay ;
 And promis'd, vainly promis'd, to bestow
 Immortal life exempt from age and wo :
 How, sav'd from storms, Phæacia's coast he trod, 365
 By great Alcinous honour'd as a God,
 Who gave him last his country to behold,
 With change of raiment, brass, and heaps of gold.
 He ended, sinking into sleep, and shares
 A sweet forgetfulness of all his cares. 370
 Soon

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Soon as soft slumber eas'd the toils of day,
Minerva rushes through th' æreal way,
And bids Aurora with her golden wheels
Flame from the ocean o'er the eastern hills :
Uprose Ulysses from the genial bed, 375
And thus with thought mature the monarch said.

My queen, my consort ! through a length of years,
We drank the cup of sorrow mix'd with tears,
Thou, for thy lord ; while me th' immortal pow'rs
Detain'd reluctant from my native shores. 380
Now, blest'd again by heav'n, the queen display,
And rule our palace with an equal sway :
Be it my care, by loans, or martial toils,
To throng my empty folds with gifts or spoils.
But now I haste to blest Laertes' eyes 385
With sight of his Ulysses ere he dies ;
The good old man, to wasting woes a prey,
Weeps a sad life in solitude away.

But hear, though wise ! This morning shall unfold
The deathful scene, on heroes, heroes roll'd : 390
Thou with thy maids within the palace stay,
From all the scene of tumult far away !

He spoke, and sheath'd in arms, incessant flies
To wake his son, and bid his friends arise.
To arms ! aloud he cries : his friends obey, 395
With glitt'ring arms their manly limbs array,
And pass the city-gate ; Ulysses leads the way.

Now flames the rosy dawn, but Pallas shrouds
The latent warriors in a veil of clouds.

THE

T H E
O D Y S S E Y.

B O O K XXIV.

T H E A R G U M E N T.

The souls of the suitors are conducted by Mercury to the infernal shades. Ulysses in the country goes to the retirement of his father Laertes; he finds him busied in his garden all alone: the manner of his discovery to him is beautifully described. They return together to his lodge, and the king is acknowledged by Dolius and the servants. The Ithacensians, led by Eupithes, the father of Antinous, rise against Ulysses, who gives them battle, in which Eupithes is killed by Laertes: and the goddess Pallas makes a lasting peace between Ulysses and his subjects, which concludes the Odyssey.

C Yllenius now to Pluto's dreary reign
Conveys the dead, a lamentable train!
The golden wand, that causes sleep to fly,
Or in soft slumber seals the wakeful eye,
That drives the ghosts to realms of night or day,
Points out the long, uncomfortable way.
Trembling the spectres glide, and plaintive vent
Thin, hollow screams, along the deep descent.
As in the cavern of some rifted den,
Where flock nocturnal bats, and birds obscene;
Cluster'd they hang, till at some sudden shock,
They move, and murmurs run through all the rock:
So cowering fled the sable heaps of ghosts,
And such a scream fill'd all the dismal coasts.

And

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And now they reach'd the earth's remotest ends; 15
 And now the gates where ev'ning Sol descends,
 And Leucas' rock, and Ocean's utmost streams,
 And now pervade the dusky land of dreams;
 And rest at last, where souls unbodied dwell
 In ever-flow'ring meads of asphodel. 20
 The empty forms of men inhabit there,
 Impassive semblance, images of air!

Nought else are all that shin'd on earth before;
 Ajax, and great Achilles are no more!
 Yet still a master-ghost, the rest he aw'd, 25
 The rest ador'd him, tow'ring as he trod;
 Still at his side is Nestor's son survey'd,
 And lov'd Patroclus still attends his shade.

New as they were to that infernal shore,
 The suitors stopp'd, and gaz'd the hero o'er, 30
 When, moving slow, the regal form they view'd
 Of great Atrides: him in pomp pursu'd
 And solemn sadness through the gloom of hell,
 The train of those who by Ægysthus fell.
 O mighty chief! (Pelides thus began), 35
 Honour'd by Jove above the lot of man!
 King of a hundred kings! to whom resign'd
 The strongest, bravest, greatest of mankind!
 Com'st thou the first, to view this dreary state?
 And was the noblest the last mark of fate? 40
 Condemn'd to pay the great arrear so soon,
 The lot which all lament, and none can shun;
 Oh! better hadst thou sunk in Trojan ground,
 With all thy full-blown honours cover'd round!
 Then grateful Greece with streaming eyes might raise 45
 Historic marbles to record thy praise:
 Thy praise eternal on the faithful stone,
 Had with transmissive glories grac'd thy son.
 But heavier fates were destin'd to attend:
 What man is happy till he knows his end? 50

O son of Peleus! greater than mankind!
 (Thus Agamemnon's kingly shade rejoind)
 Thrice happy thou! to press the martial plain
 'Midst heaps of heroes in thy quarrel slain:

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In clouds of smoke, rais'd by the noble fray, 55 }
 Great and terrific ev'n in death you lay, }
 And deluges of blood flow'd round you ev'ry way. }
 Nor ceas'd the strife, till Jove himself oppos'd,
 And all in tempests the dire ev'ning clos'd.
 Then to the fleet we bore thy honour'd load, 60
 And decent on the fun'ral bed bestow'd.
 Then unguents sweet, and tepid streams we shed ; }
 Tears flow'd from ev'ry eye, and o'er the dead }
 Each clipt the curling honours of his head. }
 Struck at the news, thy azure mother came ; 65
 The sea-green sisters wait'd on the dame.
 A voice of loud lament through all the main
 Was heard, and terror seiz'd the Grecian train :
 Back to their ships the frighted host had fled ;
 But Nestor spoke, they listen'd, and obey'd : 70
 (From old experience Nestor's counsel springs,
 And long vicissitudes of human things).
 " Forbear your flight ; fair Thetis from the main
 " To mourn Achilles leads her azure train."
 Around thee stand the daughters of the deep, 75
 Robe thee in heav'nly vests, and round thee weep ;
 Round thee, the Muses, with alternate strain,
 In ever-consecrating verse, complain.
 Each warlike Greek the moving music hears,
 And iron-hearted heroes melt in tears. 80
 Till sev'nteen nights and sev'nteen days return'd,
 All that was mortal or immortal mourn'd.
 To flames we gave thee, the succeeding day,
 And fatted sheep and fable oxen slay ;
 With oils and honey blaze th' augmented fires, 85
 And like a God adorn'd, thy earthly part expires.
 Unnumber'd warriors round the burning pile
 Urge the fleet courser's or the racer's toil ;
 Thick clouds of dust o'er all the circle rise,
 And the mix'd clamour thunders in the skies. 90
 Soon as absorb'd in all-embracing flame
 Sunk what was mortal of thy mighty name,
 We then collect thy snowy bones, and place
 With wines and unguents in a golden vase.

(The

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(The vase to Thetis Bacchus gave of old, 95
 And Vulcan's art enrich'd the sculptur'd gold).
 There we thy relics, great Achilles ! blend
 With dear Patroclus, thy departed friend :
 In the same urn a sep'rate space contains
 Thy next-belov'd, Antilochus' remains. 100
 Now all the sons of warlike Greece-surround
 Thy destin'd tomb, and cast a mighty mound :
 High on the shore the growing hill we raise,
 That wide th'extended Hellespont surveys ;
 Where all, from age to age who pass the coast, 105
 May point Achilles' tomb, and hail the mighty ghost.
 Thetis herself to all our peers proclaims
 Heroic prizes and exequial games.
 The Gods assented ; and around thee lay
 Rich spoils and gifts that blaz'd against the day. 110
 Oft have I seen with solemn fun'ral games
 Heroes and kings committed to the flames ;
 But strength of youth, or valour of the brave,
 With nobler contest ne'er renown'd a grave.
 Such were the games by azure Thetis giv'n ; 115
 And such thy honours, oh belov'd of heav'n !
 Dear to mankind thy fame survives, nor fades
 Its bloom eternal in the Stygian shades.
 But what to me avail my honours gone,
 Successful toils, and battles bravely won ? 120
 Doom'd by stern Jove at home to end my life,
 By curs'd Ægythus, and a faithless wife !
 Thus they ; while Hermes o'er the dreary plain
 Led the sad numbers by Ulysses slain.
 On each majestic form they cast a view, 125
 And tim'rous pass'd, and awfully withdrew.
 But Agamemnon, through the gloomy shade,
 His ancient host Amphimedon survey'd ;
 Son of Melanthius ! (he began), O say !
 What cause compell'd so many, and so gay, 130
 To tread the downward, melancholy way ?
 Say, could one city yield a troop so fair ?
 Were all these partners of one native air ?

Or

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Or did the rage of stormy Neptune sweep
Your lives at once, and whelm beneath the deep? 135
Did nightly thieves, or pirates cruel bands,
Drench with your blood your pillag'd country's sands?
Or well-defending some beleaguer'd wall,
Say, for the public did ye greatly fall?
Inform thy guest; for such I was of yore, 140
When our triumphant navies touch'd your shore;
Forc'd a long month the wintry seas to bear,
To move the great Ulysses to the war.

O king of men! I faithful shall relate
(Reply'd Amphimedon) our hapless fate. 145
Ulysses absent, our ambitious aim
With rival loves pursu'd his royal dame:
Her coy reserve, and prudence mix'd with pride,
Our common suit nor granted, nor deny'd,
But close with inward hate our deaths design'd; 150
Vers'd in all arts of wily womankind.
Her hand, laborious, in delusion, spread
A spacious loom, and mix'd the various thread:
Ye peers, (she cry'd), who press to gain my heart
Where dead Ulysses claims no more a part, 155
Yet a short space your rival suit suspend,
Till this funereal web my labours end:
Cease, till to good Laertes I bequeath
A task of grief, his ornaments of death:
Lest, when the fates his royal ashes claim, 160
The Grecian matrons taint my spotless fame;
Should he, long honour'd with supreme command,
Want the last duties of a daughter's hand.

The fiction pleas'd: our gen'rous train complies,
Nor fraud mistrusts in virtue's fair disguise. 165
The work she ply'd; but studious of delay,
Each following night revers'd the toils of day.
Unheard, unseen, three years her arts prevail;
The fourth, her maid reveal'd th' amazing tale,
And show'd, as unperceiv'd we took our stand, 170
The backward labours of her faithless hand.

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Forc'd, she completes it ; and before us lay
 The mingled web, whose gold and silver ray
 Display'd the radiance of the night and day.
 Just as she finish'd her illustrious toil, 175
 Ill fortune led Ulysses to our isle.
 Far in a lonely nook, beside the sea,
 At an old swineherd's rural lodge he lay :
 Thither his son from sandy Pyle repairs,
 And speedy lands, and secretly confers. 180
 They plan our future ruin, and resort
 Confed'rate to the city and the court.
 First came the son ; the father next succeeds,
 Clad like a beggar, whom Eumæus leads ;
 Propt on a staff, deform'd with age and care, 185
 And hung with rags, that flutter'd in the air.
 Who could Ulysses in that form behold ?
 Scorn'd by the young, forgotten by the old,
 Ill us'd by all ! to ev'ry wrong resign'd,
 Patient he suffer'd with a constant mind. 190
 But when, arising in his wrath t' obey
 The will of Jove, he gave the vengeance way ;
 The scatter'd arms that hung around the dome
 Careful he treasur'd in a private room :
 Then to her suitors bade his queen propose 195
 The archer's strife ; the source of future woes,
 And omen of our death ! In vain we drew
 The twanging string, and try'd the stubborn yew :
 To none it yields but great Ulysses' hands ;
 In vain we threat ; Telemachus commands : 200
 The bow he snatch'd, and in an instant bent ;
 Through ev'ry ring the victor arrow went.
 Fierce on the threshold then in arms he stood ;
 Pour'd forth the darts, that thirsted for our blood,
 And frown'd before us, dreadful as a God ! 205
 First bleeds Antinous : thick the shafts resound ;
 And heaps on heaps the wretches strow the ground ;
 This way, and that, we turn, we fly, we fall ;
 Some God assisted, and unmann'd us all :
 Ignoble cries precede the dying groans ; 210
 And batter'd brains and blood besmear the stones.

Thus,

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Thus, great Atrides ! thus Ulysses drove
The shades thou seest, from yon fair realms above.
Our mangled bodies now deform'd with gore,
Cold and neglected, spread the marble floor. 215
No friend to bathe our wounds ! or tears to shed.
O'er the pale corse ! the honour of the dead.

Oh blest'd Ulysses ! (thus the king express'd
His sudden rapture), in thy consort blest'd !
Not more thy wisdom, than her virtue, shin'd ; 220
Not more thy patience, than her constant mind.
Learius' daughter, glory of the past,
And model to the future age, shall last :
The Gods, to honour her fair fame, shall raise
(Their great reward) a poet in her praise. 225
Not such, oh Tyndarus ! thy daughter's deed,
By whose dire hand her king and husband bled :
Her shall the muse to infamy prolong,
Example dread ! and theme of tragic song
'The gen'ral sex shall suffer in her shame, 230
And ev'n the best that bears a woman's name.

Thus in the regions of eternal shade
Confer'd the mournful phantoms of the dead.
While from the town, Ulysses, and his band,
Pass'd to Laertes' cultivated land. 235
The ground himself had purchas'd with his pain,
And labour made the rugged soil a plain.
There stood his mansion of the rural sort,
With useful buildings round the lowly court :
Where the few servants that divide his care, 240
Took their laborious rest, and homely fare ;
And one Sicilian matron, old and sage,
With constant duty tends his drooping age.

Here now arriving, to his rustic band
And martial son, Ulysses gave command : 245
Enter the house, and of the bristly swine
Select the largest to the pow'rs divine.
Alone, and unattended, let me try
If yet I share the old man's memory ;

376 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book XXIV.

If those dim eyes can yet Ulysses know, 250
 (Their light and dearest object long ago),
 Now chang'd with time, with absence, and with wo!
 Then to his train he gives his spear and shield;
 The house they enter; and he seeks the field,
 Through rows of shade with various fruitage crown'd,
 And labour'd scenes of richest verdure round. 256
 Nor aged Dolius, nor his sons were there,
 Nor servants, absent on another care;
 To search the woods for sets of flow'ry thorn,
 Their orchard-bounds to strengthen and adorn. 260
 But all alone the hoary king he found;
 His habit coarse, but warmly wrapt around;
 His head, that bow'd with many a pensive care,
 Fenc'd with a double cap of goatskin hair
 His buskins old, in former service torn, 265
 But well repair'd; and gloves against the thorn.
 In this array the kingly gard'ner stood,
 And clear'd a plant, encumber'd with its wood.
 Beneath a neighb'ring tree, the chief divine
 Gaz'd o'er his fire, retracing ev'ry line, 270
 The ruins of himself! now worn away
 With age, yet still majestic in decay!
 Sudden his eyes releas'd their war'ry store;
 The much-enduring man could bear no more.
 Doubtful he stood, if instant to embrace 275
 His aged limbs, to kiss his rev'rend face,
 With eager transport to disclose the whole,
 And pour at once the torrent of his soul.—
 Not so: his judgment takes the winding way
 Of question distant, and of soft essay; 280
 More gentle methods on weak age employs,
 And moves the sorrows to enhance the joys.
 Then to his fire with beating heart he moves,
 And with a tender pleasantry reproves;
 Who digging round the plant still hangs his head, 285
 Nor ought remits the work, while thus he said.
 Great is thy skill, oh father! great thy toil;
 Thy careful hand is stamp'd on all the soil;

Thy

Book XXIV. HOMER'S ODYSSEY: 377

Thy Squadron'd vineyards well thy art declare,
 The olive green, blue fig, and pendent pear; 290
 And not one empty spot escapes thy care.
 On ev'ry plant and tree thy cares are shown,
 Nothing neglected, but thyself alone.
 Forgive me, father, if this fault I blame;
 Age so advanc'd may some indulgence claim. 295
 Not for thy sloth I deem thy lord unkind;
 Nor speaks thy form a mean or servile mind:
 I read a monarch in that princely air,
 The same thy aspect, if the same thy care;
 Soft sleep, fair garmen's, and the joys of wine, 300
 These are the rights of age, and should be thine.
 Who then thy master, say? and whose the land
 So dress'd and manag'd by thy skilful hand?
 But chief, oh tell me! (what I question most),
 Is this the far-fam'd Ithacensian coast? 305
 For so reported the first man I view'd,
 (Some surly islander, of manners rude),
 Nor farther conference vouchsaf'd to stay;
 Heedless he whistled, and pursu'd his way.
 But thou! whom years have taught to understand, 310
 Humanely hear, and answer my demand:
 A friend I seek, a wise one and a brave,
 Say, lives he yet, or moulders in the grave?
 Time was (my fortunes then were at the best)
 When at my house I lodg'd this foreign guest; 315
 He said, from Ithaca's fair isle he came,
 And old Laertes was his father's name.
 To him whatever to a guest is ow'd
 I paid, and hospitable gifts bestow'd;
 To him sev'n talents of pure ore I told, 320
 Twelve cloaks, twelve vests, twelve tunics stiff with
 A bowl that rich with polish'd silver flames, [gold,
 And, skill'd in female works, four lovely dames.
 At this the father, with a father's fears;
 (His venerable eyes bedimm'd with tears). 325
 This is the land; but ah! thy gifts are lost,
 For godless men, and rude, possess the coast:

378 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book XXIV.

Sunk is the glory of this once-fam'd shore !
 Thy ancient friend, oh stranger, is no more !
 Full recompense thy bounty else had born ; 330
 For ev'ry good man yields a just return :
 So civil rights demand ; and who begins
 The track of friendship, not pursuing, sins.
 But tell me, stranger, be the truth confest,
 What years have circled since thou saw'st that guest ?
 That hapless guest, alas ! for ever gone ! 336
 Wretch that he was ! and that I am ! my son !
 If ever man to misery was born,
 'Twas his to suffer, and 'tis mine to mourn !
 Far from his friends, and from his native reign, 340
 He lies a prey to monsters of the main,
 Or savage beasts his mangled relics tear,
 Or screaming vultures scatter through the air :
 Nor could his mother fun'ral unguents shed ;
 Nor wail'd his father o'er th' untimely dead ; 345
 Nor his sad consort, on the mournful bier,
 Seal'd his cold eyes, or dropp'd a tender tear !
 But tell me, who thou art ? and what thy race ?
 Thy town, thy parents, and thy native place ?
 Or if a merchant in pursuit of gain, 350
 What port receiv'd thy vessel from the main ?
 Or com'st thou single, or attend thy train ?
 Then thus the son : From Alybas I came,
 My palace there ; Eperitus my name.
 Not vulgar born ; from Aphidas the king, 355
 Of Polypemon's royal line, I spring.
 Some adverse dæmon from Sicania bore
 Our wand'ring course, and drove us on your shore :
 Far from the town, an unfrequented bay
 Reliev'd our weary'd vessel from the sea. 360
 Five years have circled since these eyes pursu'd
 Ulysses parting through the fable flood ;
 Prosp'rous he sail'd, with dexter auguries,
 And all the wing'd good omens of the skies.
 Well hop'd we, then, to meet on this fair shore, 365
 Whom heav'n, alas ! decreed to meet no more.

Quick

Book. XXIV. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 379

Quick through the father's heart these accents ran ;
Grief seiz'd at once, and wrapt up all the man ;
Deep from his soul he sigh'd, and sorrowing spread
A cloud of ashes on his hoary head. 370

Trembling with agonies of strong delight
Stood the great son, heart-wounded with the sight :
He ran, he seiz'd him with a strict embrace,
With thousand kisses wander'd o'er his face ;

I, I am he : oh, father ! rise, behold 375
Thy son, with twenty winters now grown old ;
Thy son, so long desir'd, so long detain'd,
Restor'd, and breathing in his native land :
These floods of sorrow, oh my sire ! restrain !

The vengeance is complete ; the suitor train, 380
Stretch'd in our palace, by these hands lie slain.

Amaz'd, Laertes : " Give some certain sign,
" (If such thou art) to manifest thee mine."
Lo here the wound (he cries) receiv'd of yore,
The scar indented by the tusky boar, 385

When by thyself and by Anticlea sent,
To old Autolycus's realms I went.
Yet by another sign thy offspring know ;
The sev'ral trees you gave me long ago,
While, yet a child, these fields I lov'd to trace, 390
And trod thy footsteps with unequal pace ;

To ev'ry plant in order as we came,
Well-pleas'd you told its nature, and its name,
Whate'er my childish fancy ask'd, bestow'd ;
Twelve pear-trees bowing with their pendent load, }
And ten, that red with blushing apples glow'd ; 396 }

Full fifty purple figs ; and many a row
Of various vines that then began to blow,
A future vintage ! when the Hours produce
Their latent buds, and Sol exalts the juice. 400

Smit with the signs which all his doubts explain,
His heart within him melts ; his knees sustain
Their feeble weight no more ; his arms alone
Support him, round the lov'd Ulysses thrown ;
He faints, he sinks, with mighty joys oppress'd : 405
Ulysses clasps him to his eager breast.

Soon

380 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book XXIV.

Soon as returning life regains its feat,
 And his breath lengthens, and his pulses beat;
 Yes, I believe, (he cries), almighty Jove!
 Heav'n rules us yet, and Gods there are above. 410
 'Tis so—the suitors for their wrongs have paid—
 But what shall guard us, if the town invade?
 If, while the news through ev'ry city flies,
 All Ithaca and Cephalenia rise?

To this Ulysses: As the Gods shall please. 415
 Be all the rest; and set thy soul at ease.
 Haste to the cottage by this orchard side,
 And take the banquet which our cares provide:
 There wait thy faithful band of rural friends,
 And there the young Telemachus attends. 420

Thus having said, they trac'd the garden o'er,
 And stooping enter'd at the lowly door.
 The swains and young Telemachus they found;
 The victim portion'd, and the goblet crown'd.
 The hoary king his old Sicilian maid 425
 Perfum'd and wash'd, and gorgeously array'd.
 Pallas attending gives his frame to shine
 With awful port, and majesty divine;
 His gazing son admires the godlike grace,
 And air celestial dawning o'er his face. 430

What God (he cry'd) my father's form improves?
 How high he treads, and how enlarg'd he moves?

Oh! would to all the deathless pow'rs on high,
 Pallas and Jove, and him who gilds the sky!
 (Reply'd the king, elated with his praise), 435
 My strength were still, as once in better days;
 When the bold Cephalens the leaguer form'd,
 And proud Nericus trembled as I storm'd.

Such were I now, not absent from your deed:
 When the last sun beheld the suitors bleed, 440
 This arm had aided yours; this hand bestrown
 Our floors with death, and push'd the slaughter on;
 Nor had the fire been sep'rate from the son. }

They commun'd thus; while homeward bent their
 way

The swains, fatigu'd with labours of the day; 445
 Dolius.

Book XXIV. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 381

Dolius the first, the venerable man ;
 And next his sons, a long succeeding train.
 For due refection to the bow'r they came,
 Call'd by the careful old Sicilian dame,
 Who nurs'd the children, and now tends the fire ; 450
 They see their lord, they gaze, and they admire.
 On chairs and beds in order seated round,
 They share the gladsome board ; the roofs resound.
 While thus Ulysses to his ancient friend :

“ Forbear your wonder, and the feast attend ; 455

“ The rites have waited long.” The chief commands
 Their loves in vain ; old Dolius spreads his hands,
 Springs to his master with a warm embrace,
 And fastens kisses on his hands and face :

Then thus broke out. Oh long, oh daily mourn'd !
 Beyond our hopes, and to our wish, return'd ! 460

Conducted sure by heav'n ! for heav'n alone
 Could work this wonder : welcome to thy own !
 And joys and happiness attend thy throne !

Who knows thy blest'd, thy wish'd return ? oh say, 465
 To the chaste queen shall we the news convey ?
 Or hears she, and with blessings loads the day ?

Dismiss that care, for to the royal bride
 Already is it known, (the king reply'd,
 And straight resum'd his seat) ; while round him bows 470
 Each faithful youth, and breathes out ardent vows :
 Then all beneath their father take their place,
 Rank'd by their ages, and the banquet grace.

Now flying fame the swift report had spread
 Through all the city, of the suitors dead. 475
 In throngs they rise, and to the palace croud ;
 Their sighs were many, and the tumult loud.

Weeping they bear the mangled heaps of slain,
 Inhume the natives in their native plain,
 The rest in ships are wafted o'er the main. 480

Then sad in council all the seniors sat,
 Frequent and full, assembled to debate.

Amid the circle first Eupithes rose,
 Big was his eye with tears, his heart with woes :

The

382 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book XXIV.

The bold Antinous was his age's pride, 485
 The first who by Ulysses' arrow dy'd.
 Down his wan cheek the trickling torrent ran,
 As mixing words with sighs, he thus began.
 Great deeds, oh friends! this wondrous man has wrought,
 And mighty blessings to his country brought. 490
 With ships he parred, and a num'rous train;
 Those, and their ships he bury'd in the main.
 Now he returns, and first essays his hand
 In the best blood of all his native land.
 Haste then, and ere to neighb'ring Pyle he flies, 495
 Or sacred Elis, to procure supplies;
 Arise, (or ye for ever fall), arise!
 Shame to this age, and all that shall succeed!
 If unreveng'd your sons and brothers bleed.
 Prove that we live, by vengeance on his head, 500
 Or sink at once forgotten with the dead.

Here ceas'd he, but indignant tears let fall
 Spoke when he ceas'd: dumb sorrow touch'd them all.
 When from the palace to the wond'ring throng
 Sage Medon came, and Phemius came along; 505
 (Restless and early sleep's soft bands they broke);
 And Medon first th' assembled chiefs bespoke.

Hear me, ye peers and elders of the land,
 Who deem this act the work of mortal hand;
 As o'er the heaps of death Ulysses strode, 510
 These eyes, these eyes beheld a present God,
 Who now before him, now beside him stood,
 Fought as he fought, and mark'd his way with blood:
 In vain old Mentor's form the God bely'd;
 'Twas heav'n that struck, and heav'n was on his side.

A sudden horror all th' assembly shook, 516
 When, slowly rising, Halitherses spoke;
 (Rev'rend and wise, whose comprehensive view
 At once the present and the future knew):
 Me too ye fathers hear! from you proceed 520
 The ills ye mourn; your own the guilty deed.
 Ye gave your sons, your lawless sons, the rein,
 (Oft warn'd by Mentor and myself in vain);

Book XXIV. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 383

An absent hero's bed they fought to soil,
An absent hero's wealth they made their spoil: 525
Immod'rate riot, and intemp'rate lust!

Th' offence was great, the punishment was just.

Weigh then my counsels in an equal scale,

Nor rush to ruin. Justice will prevail.

His mod'rate words some better minds persuade: 530

They part, and join him; but the number stay'd.

They storm, they shout, with hasty frenzy fir'd,

And second all Eupithes' rage inspir'd.

They cast their limbs in brass; to arms they run;

The broad effulgence blazes in the sun. 535

Before the city, and in ample plain,

They meet: Eupithes heads the frantic train.

Fierce for his son, he breathes his threats in air;

Fate hears them not, and death attends him there.

This pass'd on earth, while in the realms above 540

Minerva thus to cloud-compelling Jove.

May I presume to search thy secret soul?

Oh pow'r supreme, oh ruler of the whole!

Say, hast thou doom'd to this divided state

Or peaceful amity, or stern debate? 545 }

Declare thy purpose; for thy will is fate.

Is not thy thought my own? (the God replies

Who rolls the thunder o'er the vaulted skies);

Hath not long since thy knowing soul decreed,

The chief's return should make the guilty bleed? 550 }

'Tis done, and at thy will the fates succeed.

Yet hear the issue: since Ulysses' hand

Has slain the suitors, heav'n shall bless the land.

None now the kindred of th' unjust shall own;

Forgot the slaughter'd brother, and the son: 555

Each future day increase of wealth shall bring,

And o'er the past, oblivion stretch her wing.

Long shall Ulysses in his empire rest,

His people blessing, by his people blest.

Let all be peace. — He said, and gave the nod 560

That binds the fates; the sanction of the God:

And prompt to execute th' eternal will,

Descended Pallas from th' Olympian hill.

Now

384 HOMER'S ODYSSEY. Book XXIV.

Now sat Ulysses at the rural feast,
 The rage of hunger and of thirst repress : 565
 To watch the foe a trusty spy he sent :
 A son of Dolius on the message went,
 Stood in the way, and at a glance beheld
 The foe approach'd, embattled on the field.
 With backward step he hastens to the bow'r, 570
 And tells the news. They arm with all their pow'r.
 Four friends alone Ulysses' cause embrace,
 And six were all the sons of Dolius' race ;
 Old Dolius too his rusted arms put on ;
 And, still more old, in arms Laertes shone. 575
 Trembling with warmth, the hoary heroes stand,
 And brazen panoply invests the band.
 The op'ning gates at once their war display :
 Fierce they rush forth : Ulysses leads the way.
 That moment joins them with celestial aid, 580
 In Mentor's form, the Jove-descended maid :
 The suff'ring hero felt his patient breast
 Swell with new joy, and thus his son address.
 Behold, Telemachus ! (nor fear the fight) ;
 The brave embattled ; the grim front of fight ! 585
 The valiant with the valiant must contend :
 Shame not the line whence glorious you descend,
 Wide o'er the world their martial fame was spread ;
 Regard thyself, the living, and the dead.
 Thy eyes, great father ! on this battle cast, 590
 Shall learn from me Penelope was chaste.
 So spoke Telemachus ! the gallant boy
 Good old Laertes heard with panting joy ;
 And bless'd ! Thrice bless'd this happy day ! he cries,
 'The day that shows me, ere I close my eyes, 595
 A son and grandson of th' Arcean name
 Strive for fair virtue, and contest for fame !
 Then thus Minerva in Laertes' ear :
 Son of Arceus, rev'rend warrior, hear !
 Jove and Jove's daughter first implore in pray'r, 600
 Then whirling high, discharge thy lance in air.
 She said, infusing courage with the word.
 Jove and Jove's daughter then the chief implor'd,
 And

Book XXIV. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 385

And whirling high, dismiss'd the lance in air,
Full at Eupithes drove the deathful spear : 605
The brass-cheek'd helmet opens to the wound ;
He falls, earth thunders, and his arms resound.

Before the father and the conqu'ring son
Heaps rush on heaps ; they fight, they drop, they run.
Now by the sword and now the jav'lin fall 610
The rebel-race, and death had swallow'd all ;
But from on high the blue-ey'd virgin cry'd ;
Her awful voice detain'd the headlong tide.

" Forbear, ye nations ! your mad hands forbear
" From mutual slaughter : peace descends to spare."

Fear shook the nations. At the voice divine 615
They drop their jav'lins, and their rage resign.
All scatter'd round their glitt'ring weapons lie ;
Some fall to earth, and some confus'dly fly.
With dreadful shouts Ulysses pour'd along, 620
Swift as an eagle, as an eagle strong.

But Jove's red arm the burning thunder aims ;
Before Minerva shot the livid flames ;
Blazing they fell, and at her feet expi'd :
Then stopt the Goddess, trembled, and retir'd. 625

Descended from the Gods ! Ulysses, cease ;
Offend not Jove : obey, and give the peace.

So Pallas spoke. The mandate from above
The king obey'd. The virgin-seed of Jove,
In Mentor's form, confirm'd the full accord, 630
" And willing nations knew their lawful lord."

H O M E R ' s B A T T L E O F T H E F R O G S A N D M I C E .

Translated by Mr PARNELL.

Corrected by Mr POPE.

Names of the MICE.

PSYCARPAX, *One who plunders granaries.*
 Troxartes, *A bread-eater.*
 Lychomile, *A lick of meal.*
 Pternotroctas, *A bacon-eater.*
 Lycopinax, *A lick of dishes.*
 Embasichytros, *A creeper into pots.*
 Lychenor, *A name from licking.*
 Troglodytes, *One who runs into holes.*
 Artophagus, *Who feeds on bread.*
 Tyroglyphus, *A cheese-scooper.*
 Pternoglyphus, *A bacon-scooper.*
 Pternophagus, *A bacon-eater.*
 Cnissodioctes, *One who follows the steam of kitchens.*
 Sitophagus, *An eater of wheat.*
 Meridarpax, *One who plunders his share.*

Names of the FROGS.

PHYSIGNATHUS, *One who swells his cheeks.*
 Peleus, *A name from mud.*
 Hydromeduse, *A ruler in the waters.*
 Hypsiboas, *A loud bawler.*
 Pelion, *from mud.*
 Seutlaeus, *Called from the beats.*
 Polyphonus, *A great babbler.*
 Lymnocharis, *One who loves the lake.*
 Crambophagus, *Cabbage-eater.*
 Lymnisius, *Called from the lake.*
 Calaminthius, *From the herb.*
 Hydrocharis, *Who loves the water.*
 Borborocates, *Who lies in the mud.*
 Prassophagus, *An eater of garlic.*
 Pelusius, *From mud.*
 Pelobates, *Who walks in the dirt.*
 Prassæus, *Called from garlick.*
 Craug-sides, *from croaking.*

H O M E R ' s

H O M E R ' s

B A T T L E

O F T H E

F R O G S A N D M I C E .

B O O K I.

TO all my rising song with sacred fire,
 Ye tuneful Nine, ye sweet celestial quire !
 From Helicon's imbow'ring height repair,
 Attend my labours, and reward my pray'r.
 The dreadful toils of raging Mars I write, 5
 The springs of contest, and the fields of fight ;
 How threat'ning mice advanc'd with warlike grace,
 And wag'd dire combats with the croaking race.
 Not louder tumults shook Olympus' tow'rs,
 When earth-born giants dar'd immortal-pow'rs. 10
 These equal acts an equal glory claim,
 And thus the Muse records the tale of fame.

Once on a time, fatigu'd and out of breath,
 And just escap'd the stretching claws of death,
 A gentle mouse, whom cats pursu'd in vain, 15
 Elies swift of foot across the neighb'ring plain,
 Hangs o'er a brink his eager thirst to cool,
 And dips his whiskers in the standing pool ;
 When near a courteous frog advanc'd his head,
 And from the waters, hoarse resounding, said. 20

What art thou, stranger ? what the line you boast ?
 What chance hath cast thee panting on our coast ?
 With strictest truth let all thy words agree,
 Nor let me find a faithless mouse in thee.

If worthy friendship, proffer'd friendship take, 25
 And ent'ring view the pleasurable lake :
 Range o'er my palace, in my bounty share,
 And glad return from hospitable fare.
 This silver realm extends beneath my sway,
 And me, their monarch, all its frogs obey. 30
 Great Phrygnathus I, from Peleus' race,
 Begot in fair Hydromeduse' embrace,
 Where, by the nuptial bank that paints his side,
 The swift Eridanus delights to glide.
 Thee too, thy form, thy strength, and port proclaim, 35
 A sceptred king ; a son of martial fame ;
 Then trace thy line, and aid my guessing eyes.
 Thus ceas'd the frog, and thus the mouse replies.
 Known to the Gods, the men, the birds that fly,
 Through wild expanses of the midway sky, 40
 My name resounds ; and if unknown to thee,
 The soul of great Psycarpax lives in me,
 Of brave Troxartes' line, whose sleeky down
 In love compress'd Lycomile the brown.
 My mother she, and princess of the plains 45
 Where-e'er her father Pternotroctas reigns :
 Born where a cabin lifts its airy shade,
 With figs, with nuts, with vary'd dainties fed.
 But since our natures nought in common know,
 From what foundation can a friendship grow ? 50
 These curling waters o'er thy palace roll ;
 But man's high food supports my princely soul.
 In vain the circled loaves attempt to lie
 Conceal'd in flasks from my curious eye ;
 In vain the tripe that boasts the whitest hue, 55
 In vain the gilded bacon shuns my view,
 In vain the cheeses, offspring of the pale,
 Or honey'd cakes, which Gods themselves regale.
 And as in arts I shine, in arms I fight,
 Mix'd with the bravest, and unknown to flight. 60
 Tho' large to mine the human form appear,
 Not man himself can smite my soul with fear,
 Sly to the bed with silent steps I go,
 Attempt his finger, or attack his toe,

And

Book I. FROGS AND MICE. 389

And fix indented wounds with dextrous skill, 65
 Sleeping he feels, and only seems to feel.
 Yet have we foes which direful dangers cause,
 Grim owls with talons arm'd, and cats with claws;
 And that false trap, the den of silent fate,
 Where death his ambush plants around the bait; 70
 All dreaded these, and dreadful o'er the rest.
 The potent warriors of the tabby vest,
 If to the dark we fly, the dark they trace,
 And rend our heroes of the nibbling race.
 But me, nor stalks, nor wat'rish herbs delight, 75
 Nor can the crimson radish charm my sight;
 The lake-resounding frogs selected fare,
 Which not a mouse of any taste can bear.

As thus the downy prince his mind express'd,
 His answer thus the croaking king address'd. 80

Thy words luxuriant on thy dainties rove,
 And, stranger, we can boast of bounteous Jove:
 We sport in water, or we dance on land,
 And born amphibious, food from both command.
 But trust thyself where wonders ask thy view, 85
 And safely tempt those seas, I'll bear thee through:
 Ascend my shoulders, firmly keep thy seat,
 And reach my marshy court, and feast in state.

He said, and leant his back; with nimble bound
 Leaps the light mouse, and clasps his arms around, 90
 Then wond'ring floats, and sees with glad survey
 The winding banks dissemble ports at sea.
 But when aloft the curling water rides,
 And wets with azure wave his downy sides;
 His thoughts grow conscious of approaching wo, 95
 His idle tears with vain repentance flow,
 His locks he rends, his trembling feet he rears;
 Thick beats his heart with unaccustom'd fears;
 He sighs, and chill'd with danger, longs for shore:
 His tail extended forms a fruitless oar, 100
 Half drench'd in liquid death his pray'rs he spake,
 And thus bemoan'd him from the dreadful lake.

So pass'd Europa thro' the rapid sea,
 Trembling and fainting all the vent'rous way;

With oary feet the bull triumphant rode, 105
And safe in Crete depos'd his lovely load.

Ah safe at last ! may thus the frog support
My trembling limbs to reach his ample court.

As thus he sorrows, death ambiguous grows,
Lo ! from the deep a water Hydra rose ; 110

He rolls his sanguin'd eyes, his bosom heaves ;
And darts with active rage along the waves.

Confus'd, the monarch sees his hissing foe,
And dives to shun the fable fates below.

Forgetful frog ! The friend thy shoulders bore, 115
Unskill'd in swimming, floats remote from shore.

He grasps with fruitless hands to find relief,
Supinely falls, and grinds his teeth with grief ;

Plunging he sinks, and struggling mounts again,
And sinks, and strives, but strives with fate in vain. 120

The weighty moisture clogs his hairy vest,
And thus the prince his dying rage exprest.

Nor thou, that flings me flound'ring from thy back,
As from hard rocks rebounds the shatt'ring wrack,

Nor thou shalt 'scape thy due, perfidious king ! 125
Pursu'd by vengeance on the swiftest wing :

At land thy strength could never equal mine,
At sea to conquer, and by craft, was thine.

But heav'n has Gods, and Gods have searching eyes :
Ye mice, ye mice, my great avengers rise ! 130

This said, he sighing gasp'd, and gasping dy'd,
His death the young Lycophinax espy'd,

As on the flow'ry brink he pass'd the day,
Bask'd in the beam, and loiter'd life away :

Loud shrieks the mouse, his shrieks the shores repeat ;
The nibbling nation learn their hero's fate : 136

Grief, dismal grief ensues ; deep murmurs sound,
And shriller fury fills the deafen'd ground ;

From lodge to lodge the sacred heralds run,
To fix their council with the rising sun ; 140

Where great Troxartes crown'd in glory reigns,
And winds his length'ning court beneath the plains :

Pfycarpax'

Pfycarpax' father, father now no more !
 For poor Pfycarpax lies remote from shore :
 Supine he lies ! the silent waters stand,
 And no kind billow wafts the dead to land !

145

B O O K II.

WHen rosy-finger'd morn had ting'd the clouds,
 Around their monarch-mouse the nation crouds,
 Slow rose the monarch, heav'd his anxious breast,
 And thus, the council fill'd with rage, address.

For lost Pfycarpax much my soul endures, 5
 'Tis mine the private grief, the public, yours ;
 Three warlike sons adorn'd my nuptial bed,
 Three sons, alas, before their father dead !
 Our eldest perish'd by the rav'ning cat,
 As near my court the prince unheedful sat. 10
 Our next, an engine fraught with danger drew,
 The portal gap'd, the bait was hung in view,
 Dire arts assist the trap, the fates decoy,
 And men unpitying kill'd my gallant boy.
 The last, his country's hope, his parents pride, 15
 Plung'd in the lake by Physignathus, dy'd.
 Rouse all the war, my friends ! avenge the deed,
 And bleed that monarch, and his nation bleed.

His words in ev'ry breast inspir'd alarms,
 And careful Mars supply'd their host with arms. 20
 In verdant hulls despoil'd of all their beans,
 The buskin'd warriors stalk'd along the plains,
 Quills aptly bound, their bracing corselet made,
 Fac'd with the plunder of a cat they slay'd,
 The lamp's round boss affords their ample shield, 25
 Large shells of nuts their cov'ring helmet yield ;
 And o'er the region, with reflected rays,
 Tall groves of needles for their lances blaze.
 Dreadful in arms the marching mice appear :
 The wond'ring frogs perceive the tumult near, 30
 Forsake the waters, thick'ning from a ring,
 And ask, and hearken, whence the noises spring ;

When

When near the croud, disclos'd to public view,
 The valiant chief Embasichytros drew :
 The sacred herald's sceptre grac'd his hand, 35
 And thus his words express'd his king's command.
 Ye frogs ! the mice with vengeance fir'd, advance,
 And deck'd in armour shake the shining lance ;
 Their hapless prince by Phylsignathus slain,
 Extends incumbent on the wat'ry plain. 40
 Then arm your host, the doubtful battle try ;
 Lead forth those frogs that have the soul to die.

The chief retires, the croud the challenge hear,
 And proudly-swelling, yet perplex'd appear ;
 Much they resent, yet much their monarch blame, 45
 Who rising, spoke to clear his tainted fame.

O friends ! I never forc'd the mouse to death,
 Nor saw the gaspings of his latest breath.
 He, vain of youth, our art of swimming try'd,
 And vent'rous in the lake the wanton dy'd. 50
 To vengeance now by false appearance led,
 They point their anger at my guiltless head.
 But wage the rising war by deep device,
 And turn its fury on the crafty mice.

Your king directs the way ; my thoughts elate 55
 With hopes of conquest, form designs of fate.
 Where high the banks their verdant surface heave,
 And the steep sides confine the sleeping wave,
 There, near the margin, and in armour bright,
 Sustain the first impetuous shoeks of fight : 60
 Then where the dancing feather joins the crest,
 Let each brave frog his obvious mouse arrest ;
 Each strongly grasping, headlong plunge a foe,
 Till countless circles whirl the lake below ;
 Down sink the mice in yielding waters drown'd ; 65
 Loud flash the waters ; echoing shores resound :
 The frogs triumphant tread the conquer'd plain,
 And raise their glorious trophies of the slain.

He spake no more, his prudent scheme imparts
 Redoubling ardour to the boldest hearts. 70
 Green was the suit his arming heroes chose,
 Around their legs the greaves of mallows close,

Green

Green were the beets about their shoulders laid,
And green the colewort, which the target made,
Form'd of the vary'd shells the waters yield, 75
Their glossy helmets glisten'd o'er the field ;
And tap'ring sea-reeds for the polish'd spear,
With upright order pierc'd the ambient air.
Thus dress'd for war, they take th' appointed height,
Poize the long arms, and urge the promis'd fight. 80

But now, where Jove's irradiate spires arise,
With stars surrounded in æthereal skies,
(A solemn council call'd) the brazen gates
Unbar ; the Gods assume their golden seats :
The fire superior leans, and points to show 85
What wondrous combats mortals wage below :
How strong, how large, the num'rous heroes stride ;
What length of lance they shake with warlike pride :
What eager fire their rapid march reveals ;
So the fierce Centaurs ravag'd o'er the dales ; 90
And so confirm'd, the daring Titans rose,
Heap'd hills on hills, and bid the Gods be foes.

This seen, the pow'r his sacred visage rears,
He casts a pitying smile on worldly cares,
And asks what heav'nly guardians take the list, 95
Or who the mice, or who the frogs assist ?

Then thus to Pallas. If my daughter's mind
Have join'd the mice, why stays she still behind ?
Drawn forth by sav'ry steams they wind their way,
And sure attendance round thine altar pay, 100
Where while the victims gratify their taste,
They sport to please the Goddesses of the feast.

Thus spake the ruler of the spacious skies,
When thus, resolv'd, the blue-ey'd maid replies.
In vain, my father ! all their dangers plead ; 105
To such thy Pallas never grants her aid.
My flow'ry wreaths they petulantly spoil,
And rob my crystal lamps of feeding oil,
(Ills following ill) ; but what afflicts me more,
My veil, that idle race profanely tore. 110
The web was curious, wrought with art divine ;
Relentless wretches ! all the work was mine :

Along

Along the loom the purple warp I spread,
 Cast the light shoot, and cross'd the silver thread.
 In this their teeth a thousand breaches tear; 115
 The thousand breaches skilful hands repair;
 For which, vile earthly duns, thy daughter grieve,
 But Gods, that use no coin, have none to give;
 And learning's Goddess never-less can owe,
 Neglected learning gets no wealth below. 120
 Nor let the frogs to gain my succour sue,
 Those clam'rous fools have lost my favour too.
 For late, when all the conflict ceas'd at night,
 When my stretch'd sinews ach'd with eager fight,
 When spent with glorious toil, I left the field, 125
 And sunk for slumber on my swelling shield;
 Lo from the deep, repelling sweet repose,
 With noisy croakings half the nation rose:
 Devoid of rest, with aching brows I lay,
 Till cocks proclaim'd the crimson dawn of day. 130
 Let all, like me, from either host forbear,
 Nor tempt the flying furies of the spear.
 Let heav'nly blood (or what for blood may flow)
 Adorn the conquest of a meaner foe,
 Who, wildly rushing, meet the wondrous odds, 135
 Tho' Gods oppose, and brave the wounded Gods.
 O'er gilded clouds reclin'd, the danger view,
 And be the wars of mortal scenes for you.
 So mov'd the blue-ey'd queen, her words persuade,
 Great Jove assented, and the rest obey'd. 140

B O O K III.

NOW front to front the marching armies shine,
 Halt ere they meet, and from the length'ning
 line;
 The chiefs conspicuous seen, and heard afar,
 Give the loud sign to loose the rushing war;
 Their dreadful trumpets deep-mouth'd hornets sound, 5
 The sounded charge remurmurs o'er the ground;
 Ev'n

Ev'n Jove proclaims a field of horror nigh,
And rolls low thunder thro' the troubled sky.

First to the fight the large Hypsiboas flew,
And brave Lychenor with a jav'lin flew ; 10

The luckless warrior, fill'd with gen'rous flame,
Stood foremost glitt'ring in the post of fame.

When in his liver struck the jav'lin hung,
The mouse fell thund'ring, and the target rung : 15

Prone to the ground he sinks his closing eye,
And, soil'd in dust, his lovely tresses lie.

A spear at Pelion Troglodytes cast ;
The missive spear within the bosom past ; 20

Death's sable shades the fainting frog surround,
And life's red tide runs ebbing from the wound.

Embasiçytros felt Seutlæus' dart
Transfix, and quiver in his panting heart ;

But great Artophagus aveng'd the slain,
And big Seutlæus tumbling loads the plain, 25

And Polyphonus dies, a frog renown'd
For boastful speech and turbulence of sound ;

Deep through the belly pierc'd, supine he lay,
And breath'd his soul against the face of day.

The strong Lymnocharis, who view'd with ire,
A victor triumph, and a friend expire ; 30

With heaving arms a rocky fragment caught,
And fiercely flung where Troglodytes fought,

A warrior vers'd in arts, of sure retreat,
Yet arts in vain elude impending fate ;

Full on his sinewy neck the fragment fell, 35
And o'er his eye-lids clouds eternal dwell.

Lychenor (second of the glorious name)
Striding advanc'd, and took no wand'ring aim ;

Thro' all the frog the shining jav'lin flies,
And near the vanquish'd mouse the victor dies. 40

The dreadful stroke Crambophagus affrights,
Long bred to banquets, less inur'd to fights ;

Heedless he runs, and stumbles o'er the steep,
And wildly flound'ring flashes up the deep :

Lychenor, following, with a downward blow 45
Reach'd, in the lake, his unrecover'd foe ;

Gasping

Gasping he rolls, a purple stream of blood
 Distains the surface of the silver flood;
 Thro' the wide wound the rushing entrails throng,
 And slow the breathless carcase floats along. 50
 Lymnifius good Tyroglyphus assails,
 Prince of the mice that haunt the flow'ry vales,
 Lost to the milky fares and rural feat,
 He came to perish on the bank of fate.
 The dread Pternoglyphus demands the fight, 55
 Which tender Calaminthus shuns by flight;
 Drops the green target, springing quits the foe,
 Glides thro' the lake, and safely dives below.
 The dire Pternophagus divides his way
 Thro' breaking ranks, and leads the dreadful day. 60
 No nibbling prince excell'd in fierceness more,
 His parents fed him on the savage boar:
 But where his lance the field with blood imbru'd,
 Swift as he mov'd Hydrocharis pursu'd,
 Till fall'n in death he lies; a shatt'ring stone 65
 Sounds on the neck, and crushes all the bone;
 His blood pollutes the verdure of the plain,
 And from his nostrils bursts the gushing brain.
 Lycopinax with Borbocætes fights,
 A blameless frog, whom humbler life delights; 70
 The fatal jav'lin unrelenting flies,
 And darkness seals the gentle croaker's eyes.
 Incens'd Prassophagus, with sprightly bound,
 Bears Cnissodiotæ off the rising ground;
 Then drags him o'er the lake, depriv'd of breath, 75
 And, downward plunging, sinks his soul to death.
 But now the great Plycarpax shines afar,
 (Scarce he so great whose loss provok'd the war),
 Swift to revenge his fatal jav'lin fled,
 And thro' the liver struck Pelusius dead; 80
 His speckled corpse before the victor fell,
 His soul indignant sought the shades of hell.
 This saw Pelobates, and from the flood,
 Lifts with both hands a monstrous mass of mud.
 The cloud obscene o'er all the warrior flies, 85
 Dishonours his brown face, and blots his eyes.

The

Enrag'd, and wildly sputt'ring, from the shore
 A stone immense of size the warrior bore;
 A load for lab'ring earth, whose bulk to raise,
 Asks ten degen'rate mice of modern days: 90
 Full to the leg arrives the crushing wound;
 The frog, supportless, writhes upon the ground.
 Thus flush'd, the victor wars with matchless force,
 Till loud Craugasides arrests his course:
 Hoarse croaking threats precede; with fatal speed 95
 Deep thro' the belly runs the pointed reed,
 Then, strongly rugg'd, return'd imbru'd with gore,
 And on the pile his reeking entrails bore.
 The lame Sitophagus, oppress'd with pain,
 Creeps from the desp'rate dangers of the plain: 100
 And where the ditches rising weeds supply,
 To spread their lowly shades beneath the sky,
 There licks the silent mouse reliev'd of heat,
 And, safe imbower'd, avoids the chance of fate.
 But here Troxartes, Phylsignathus there, 105
 Whirl the dire furies of the pointed spear:
 Then where the foot around its ankle plies,
 Troxartes wounds, and Phylsignathus flies,
 Halts to the pool, a safe retreat to find,
 And trails a dangling length of leg behind. 110
 The mouse still urges, still the frog retires,
 And half in anguish of the flight expires;
 Then pious ardor young Prassæus brings,
 Betwixt the fortune of contending kings:
 Lank, harmless frog! with forces hardly grown, 115
 He darts the reed in combats not his own,
 Which faintly tinkling on Troxartes' shield,
 Hangs at the point, and drops upon the field.
 Now nobly tow'ring o'er the rest appears
 A gallant prince that far transcends his years, 120
 Pride of his sire, and glory of his house,
 And more a Mars in combat than a mouse:
 His action bold, robust his ample frame,
 And Meridarpax his resounding name.
 The warrior, singled from the fighting croud, 125
 Boasts the dire honours of his arms aloud;

Then strutting near the lake, with looks elate,
 Threats all its nations with approaching fate.
 And such his strength, the silver lakes around,
 Might roll their waters o'er unpeopled ground. 130
 But pow'rful Jove, who shews no less his grace
 To frogs that perish, than to human race,
 Felt soft compassion rising in his soul,
 And shook his sacred head, that shook the pole.

Then thus to all the gazing pow'rs began, 135
 The fire of Gods, and frogs, and mouse, and man.

What seas of blood I view, what worlds of slain ?
 An Iliad rising from a day's campaign !

How fierce his jav'lin, o'er the trembling lakes,
 The black-furr'd hero, Meridarpax, shakes ! 140

Unless some fav'ring Deity descend,
 Soon will the frogs loquacious empire end.

Let dreadful Pallas wing'd with pity fly,
 And make her ægis blaze before his eye :

While Mars, refulgent on his rattling car, 145
 Arrests his raging rival of the war.

He ceas'd, reclining with attentive head;
 When thus the glorious God of combats said.

Nor Pallas, Jove ! tho' Pallas take the field,
 With all the terrors of her hissing shield ; 150

Nor Mars himself, tho' Mars in armour bright
 Ascend his car, and wheel amidst the fight ;

Not these can drive the desp'rate mouse afar,
 And change the fortunes of the bleeding war.

Let all go forth, all heav'n in arms arise ; 155
 Or lanch thy own red thunder from the skies :

Such ardent bolts as flew that wondrous day,
 When heaps of Titans mix'd with mountains lay,

When all the giant-race enormous fell,
 And huge Enceladus was hurl'd to hell. 160

'Twas thus th' Armipotent advis'd the Gods,
 When from his throne the Cloud compeller nods ;

Deep length'ning-thunders run from pole to pole,
 Olympus trembles as the thunders roll.

Then swift he whirls the brandish'd bolt around, 165
 And headlong darts it at the distant ground ;

The

The bolt, discharg'd, inwrapt with lightning flies,
 And rends its flaming passage thro' the skies :
 Then earth's inhabitants, the bibblers, shake,
 And frogs, the dwellers in the waters, quaks. 170
 Yet still the mice advance their dread design,
 And the last danger threatens the croaking line ;
 Till Jove, that inly mourn'd the loss they bore,
 With strange assistance fill'd the frightened shore.

Pour'd from the neighb'ring strand, deform'd to
 view, 175

They march, a sudden unexpected crew.
 Strong suits of armour round their bodies close,
 Which like thick anvils blunt the force of blows ;
 In wheeling marches turn'd, oblique they go ;
 With harpy claws their limbs divide below ; 180
 Fell sheers the passage to their mouth command ;
 From out the flesh the bones by nature stand ;
 Broad spread their backs, their shining shoulders rise,
 Unnumber'd joints distort their lengthen'd thighs,
 With nervous cords their hands are firmly brac'd, 185
 Their round black eye-balls in their bosom plac'd ;
 On eight long feet the wondrous warriors tread,
 And either end alike supplies a head.

These to call crabs, mere mortal wits agree :
 But Gods have other names for things than we. 190

Now, where the jointures from their loins depend,
 The heroes tails with sev'ring grasps they rend.
 Here, short of feet, depriv'd the pow'r to fly,
 There without hands upon the field they lie.

Wrench'd from their holds, and scatter'd all around, 195
 The bended lances heap'd the cumber'd ground.

Helpless amazement, fear pursuing fear,
 And mad confusion thro' their host appear.
 O'er the wild waste with headlong flight they go,
 Or creep conceal'd in vaulted holes below. 200

But down Olympus, to the western seas,
 Far-shooting Phœbus drove with fainter rays ;
 And a whole war (so Jove ordain'd) begun,
 Was fought, and ceas'd, in one revolving sun.

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